



Processing tomato, the 2023 harvest campaign has concluded in Northern Italy: just under 2,800,000 tonnes produced, but with excellent quality. The Interbranch Organization communicates the official data

Parma, October 20th 2023 – The harvesting and processing tomato campaign in Northern Italy has concluded in these days. The planted area measures 38.928 hectares, of which 3.731 hectares are organically farmed, while the remaining ones are cultivated with integrated agriculture.

Little less than 2.800.000 tonnes of tomato have been produced, in detail 2.798.312 tonnes that correspond to -12% of the total amount of tomato negotiated among Industry and Producer Organizations (POs), obtaining in Northern Italy an average field yield of 71,88 t/ha, lower than the 73,93 t/ha average yield of the previous five-year period.

Specifically, the field yield of integrated production this year results to be aligned with the previous five-year period's average, while the organic field yield, with its 47,41 t/ha, is heavily lower than the average yield of the previous five-year period of 62,87 t/ha.

On the territory, the campaign presented two very different faces: very high yields resulted in the western area of Northern Italy, despite the severe hailstorm that damaged some fields, in the eastern area on the contrary the yields were definitely low due to persistent rains in May and the flood that hardly hit the Ravenna area on May 20th, causing the loss of cultivated areas altogether.

*"In essence – states **Tiberio Rabboni, President of OI Pomodoro da Industria Nord Italia** – it has been a campaign with fair, if not good, results in the western provinces while negative results, unfortunately, characterized in the eastern provinces, Ravenna and Ferrara in particular. The abnormal climate has also negatively affected the outcome of organic cultivation".*

Although limited deliveries were expected for the weeks at the end of August, given the trend of transplants, which had been blocked for two weeks in the middle of May, the summer harvest campaign took place relatively regularly, with only one significant slowdown caused by rains in late August. Despite the adversities in transplanting, the action on field of farmers and the scheduling of deliveries by the POs made it possible to manage the healthy development of the growth and the harvesting times, allowing regular deliveries throughout the entire processing period.

Furthermore, the protracted halt in transplants in May had suggested that several tomato areas would be harvested in September and October. Thanks to the good season, which throughout the month of September and mid-October favoured the ripening of a good product, the processing companies were willing to keep the factories open until the farmers completed the harvest, even if late.

Coordination between harvesting and processing was also made possible by continuous monitoring during the campaign, with a weekly appointment among POs and industry.

The Interbranch Organization supported the parties with weekly reports on the quantity and quality of the delivered tomato and with projections of the production, based on transplant distribution and historical average yields.

The heavy rains in May, recharging the aquifers, unburdened the problem of drought in the field, which was consistent the past years. *“This should not make us lower our guard down on this issue – says Rabboni –. Tomato’s stakeholders must continue to dialogue with regional and national institutions and water management consortia to promote infrastructures, in order to manage water resources, considering the effects of climate change”.*

Tomato that has been processed this year is very high in quality, reporting a 4,87 brix degree, which is among the highest values in the last decade. Given the excellent quality of the delivered product, tomato was paid with a high payment index, one among the highest in the last decade; the a reference price of tomato already started from 150 euros per tonnes, that is the highest price ever paid before by the industry to the farmers, recognizing last year’s increase in agricultural production costs, and to whom the late harvested tomato bonus and various other factories’ bonuses will be added.

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