Producer country file

The cherry in Turkey

by Cécilia Céleyrette

Although Turkey is highly renowned for its citrus production, the cherry is also one of its iconic fruits. Cultivated in this country since Roman times at least, the cherry has spread to a number of zones, making this origin the number one producer country ahead of the United States. And although this fruit has long been aimed at the local market, Turkish exporters have hoisted up their country to be the world number two exporter, behind Chile. Planting now seems to be slowing down, though shipments should step up with the gradual improvement in agricultural practices (increased yields, improved quality level, reduction in post-harvest losses), and thanks to trade agreements signed, which should open up new outlets for the Turkish cherry.

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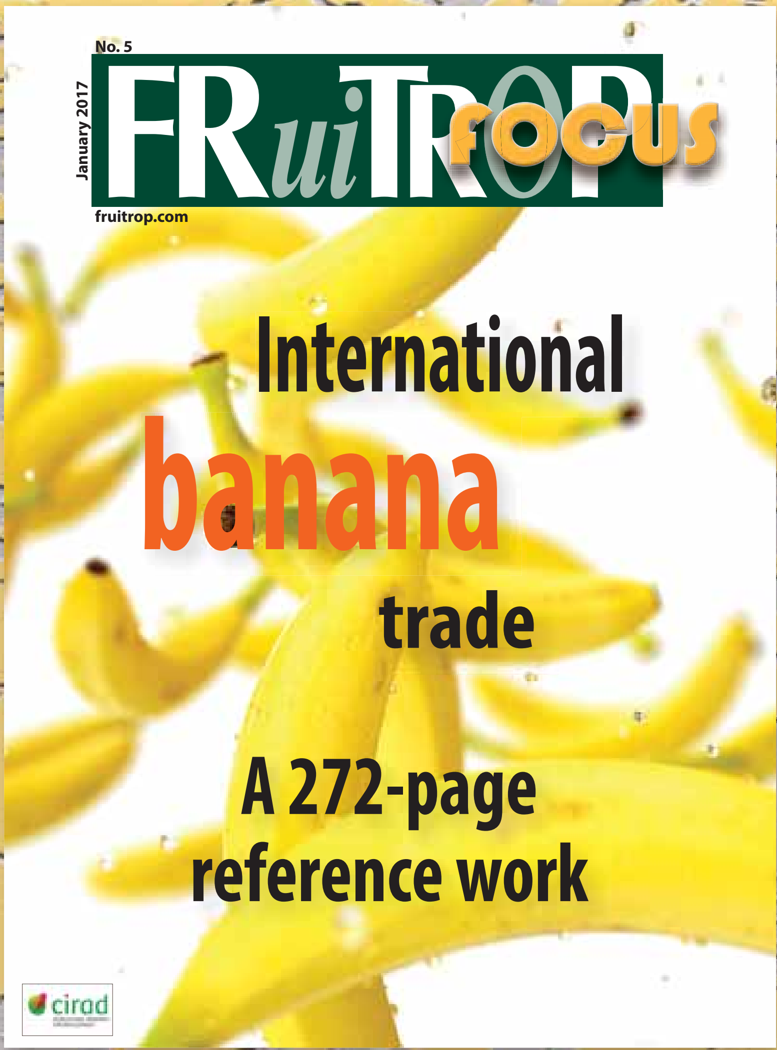

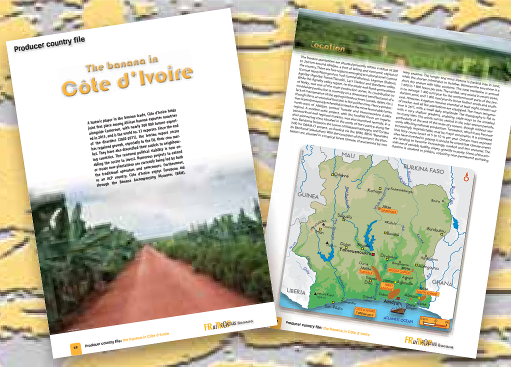

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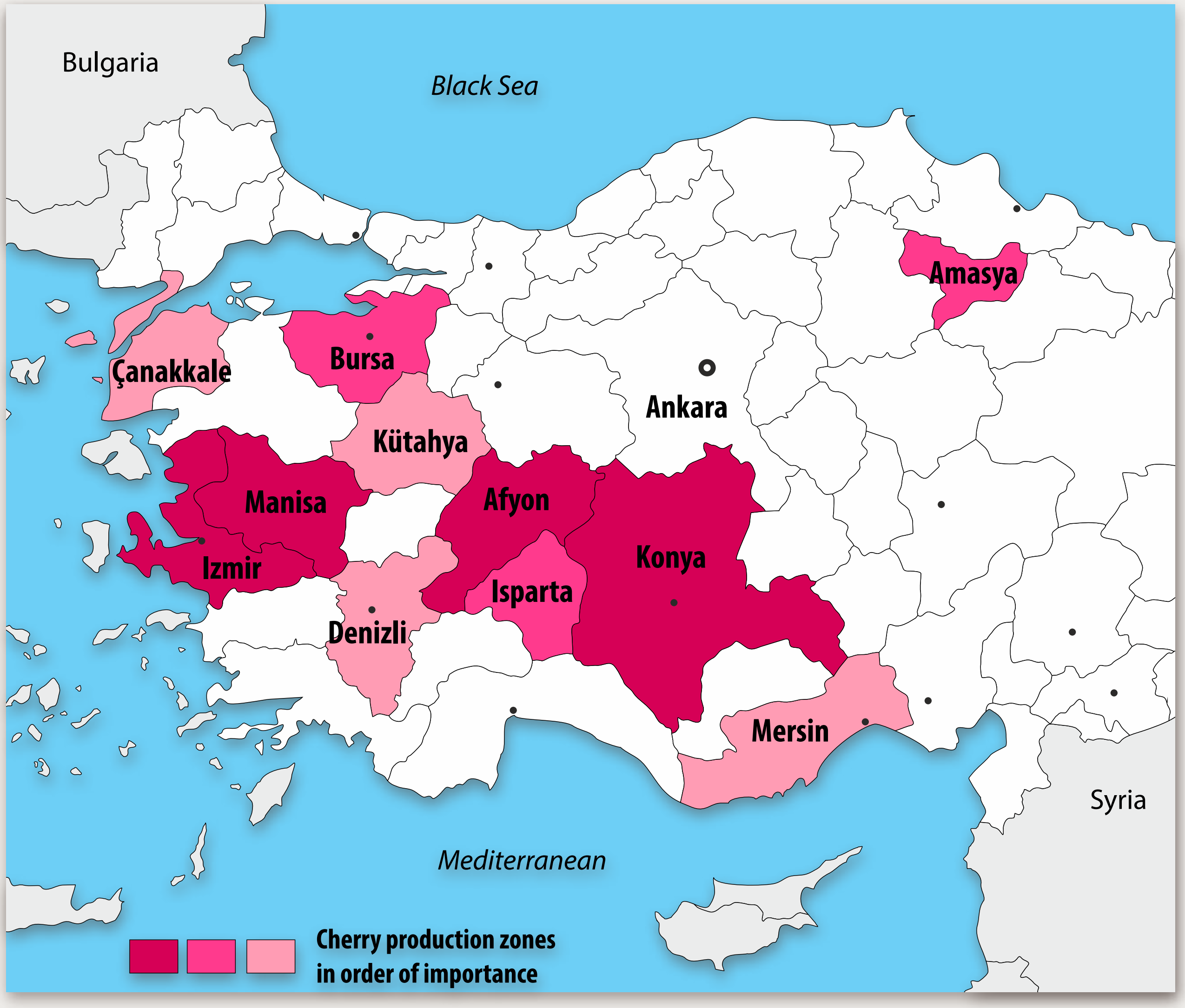
Cherry – Turkey

Location

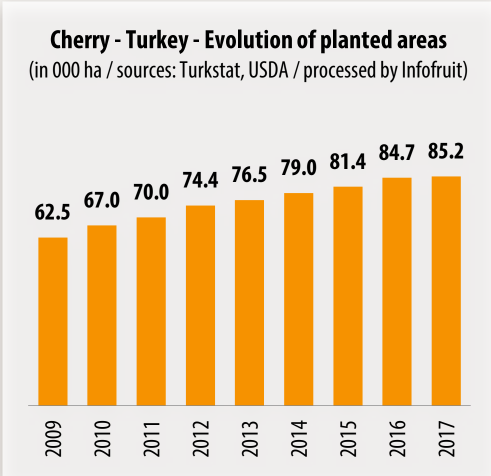
In Turkey, the cherry orchards are situated mainly in the Aegean region (Izmir), the Marmara region (Bursa) and as far as Central Anatolia (Konya). Hence Izmir province packs in approximately 10 % of production, ahead of Afyon (9 %), Manisa (7 %) and Konya (7 %). Next come the Isparta, Amasya and Bursa zones, each with 5 % of the harvest. They are finally followed by the produce from Mersin and Denizli (4 % each). Trials are also being conducted in various regions, especially on the coast (seeking early harvest/ high prices), but the lack of chilling hours does not always enable the usual cultivars to be exploited, especially Ziraat.

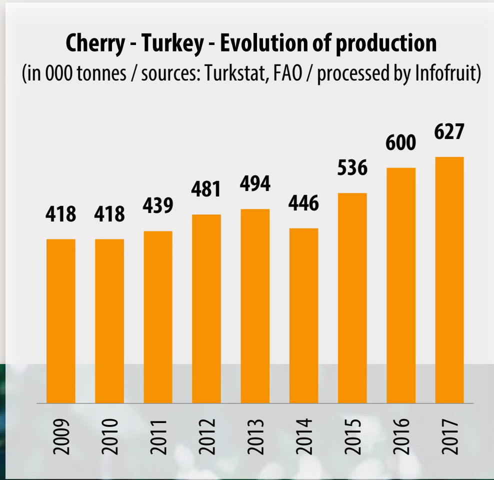


Cherry – Turkey

Production

After rising in the early 2000s (approximately + 10 % per year), the annual planting rate slowed down (to between + 5 and + 6 % until 2012), reportedly reaching less than 3 % or even practically zero in recent years. Since the cherry is highly sensitive to bad weather, progress in production has been haphazard, especially so perhaps in this country of high losses due to its agriculture still being in transition. Since although these cropping techniques are evolving, with in particular an increased planting density and planting smaller trees (up to 10 m high before) to facilitate harvesting, production is still highly traditional, and small producers often lack installations for cooling the product, and knowledge and skills to implement good practices. The big facilities can call on modern irrigation and orchard protection equipment (hail cannons, protective films, etc.), contribute toward training the producers and have GlobalGap certified stations. So yields are on an upwards trend. The prospects for a potential of 520 000 t in 2020 have been exceeded. However, as in many European countries, the country's production is facing invasion by the *Drosophila suzukii* fly, which appeared in 2016 on strawberries in the east of the country, and which seems to be gaining ground, especially in the southern regions and into Central Anatolia. Dimethoate, the treatment initially applied, was banned in 2018 by the Turkish authorities following the import veto exercised by certain European countries at France's initiative. So producers are being encouraged to step up trapping.





Cherry – Turkey

Production calendar and varieties

The most typical varieties in Turkey are Karabodur, Dalbasti and Napolyon (Napoleon).This latter variety is the most iconic in Turkish production, since it is aimed at the export sector. The 0900 Ziraat variety (Napoleon) remains by far the main variety planted, reportedly representing 70 % of surface areas, ahead of Lambert (6 %) and Stark Gold (6 %), with the other varieties representing 18 % of the cultivation area. While it provides many assets, whether in terms of taste, sizing or keeping, it has the disadvantage of middling productivity. Hybridisation trials on this variety are in progress, through the big facilities have also planted other varieties, especially early and late ones to spread out the calendar. This now begins in May and extends until July or even August in the late regions, whereas it was concentrated in June/July a few years ago. The Regina cherry seems to be one of the most promising varieties at present.

Cherry — Turkey — Production calendar

Varieties	M		J		J	
Early Lory, Early Burlat		■				
Bing, Star Giant, Giorgia, Big Lory, Sumburst			■			
Lapins, Stella, Van			■			
Selesta, 0900 Ziraat, Lambert				■		
Regina, Stark Gold, Sweet Heart					■	

Professional sources

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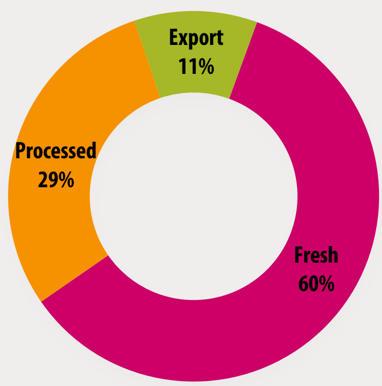
Outlets

Turkish cherry production is primarily aimed at the local market (50 to 60 % depending on the sources), with a high tonnage for the industrial sector of around 165 000 t. Exports are seeing growth, currently fluctuating between 60 000 and 80 000 t according to figures supplied by the USDA.

Cherry - Turkey - Outlets in 2017
(source: USDA / processed by Infofruit)

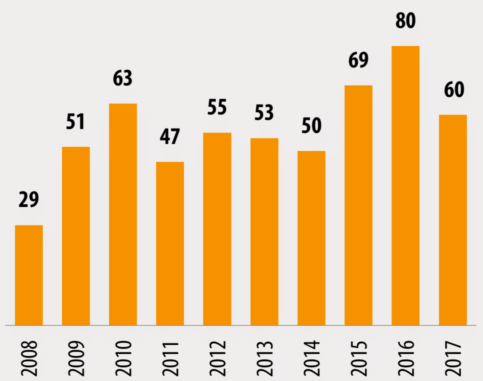


Cherry – Turkey

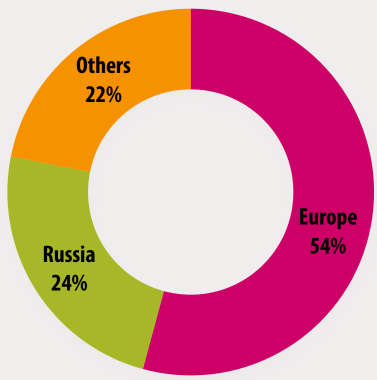
Exports

Turkish operators have big ambitions in terms of cherry exports over the coming years. These are still struggling to make headway, although all the production sector has made all the necessary efforts to improve the harvesting, storage and shipment conditions. The majority of big exporters are GlobalGap certified, though the bad weather, more difficult relations in recent years with Russia and European competition (Spain and to a lesser degree Italy) have curbed this progress. The objective remains to achieve a potential of 100 000 t, with for the moment a maximum of 80 000 t. The European market remains the main outlet, with more than 50 % of tonnages, of which 42 % aimed at the German market either directly or via Austria. Volumes shipped to the United Kingdom have fallen steeply given Spain's strong presence there. Volumes to France have also fallen with the ban on dimethoate treatments against the Drosophila suzukii fly. Furthermore, there has been little progress in the Middle East. Volumes are primarily focused on Iraq (16 %). Shipments to Asia should progress, though they were still modest in 2017 (620 t for Hong Kong/Singapore). The protocol signed with China, as of late 2017, has helped nine companies to export to this country. Protocols are also due to be opened with Malaysia and Vietnam.

Cherry - Turkey - Evolution of fresh exports
(in 000 tonnes / source: Turkstat / processed by Infofruit)



Cherry - Turkey - Breakdown of exports in 2017
(sources: Turkstat, Comext / processed by Infofruit)



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Logistics

The bulk of volumes is exported by road freight, to both Russia and Europe. The transport time is approximately six days to Russia or via Central Europe. Exporters want to expand their long-haul export shipments, especially to the Asian markets. To this end, an agreement was signed with Turkish Airlines to reinforce air freight.