



Ministry of Agriculture,  
Food and Forestry

# Fruit and Vegetables Sector in Bulgaria

Current situation  
and future development

**Georgi Sabev, Deputy Minister**

# Bulgarian Fruit Sector

- Favorable conditions
- Large number of fruit species
- New plantations - about 48% of the total area
- Harvested area in 2020 - 41,385 ha
- Total fruit production in 2020 - 202,579 tons
- Predominant share of plums and cherry plums - 25%, cherries - 24% and apples - 19%
- Difficulties experienced by the sector after the transition period
- Improvement in the years of EU membership
- After 2015 - more financial resources under the coupled support of the CAP - annual payment, based on certain areas and yields
- After 2015 – 6% increase of the area of supported species 4% production increase

# Bulgarian Vegetables Sector

- 2014-2018 - almost threefold increase of the area - from 34,000 ha to 119,000 ha
- 2019 and 2020 - decrease almost three times to 39,955 ha and 36,503 ha (due to the exclusion of chickpeas, lentils, ripe legumes from the group of vegetables)
- Total production of vegetables in 2020 - 651.6 thousand tons
- Largest share: potatoes, tomatoes, watermelons and peppers
- Greenhouse cultivation - important production share; significant part of the production - for export
- Main crops - tomatoes, cucumbers (90% of their total production), gherkins, peppers and lettuce
- Greenhouse production as a total volume in 2020 - 92.6 thousand tons
- Restored interest in vegetable production in recent years
- CAP support - significant factor influencing decision-making for production and structural specialization
- From 2015 – coupled support for a group of main crops:
  - ✓ Increase of the interest in the sector
  - ✓ Stabilization of production
  - ✓ Increase of production and areas
  - ✓ Increase of market orientation

## **Bulgarian F&V Sector support**

- Coupled support, Single Area Payment Scheme, Green Direct Payment, Redistributive Payment
- Continued support with direct payments in the period 2023-2027 under the CAP Strategic Plan
- Interventions in the CAP Strategic Plan elaborated in accordance with the priorities and funding needs and based on SWOT analysis
- The Bulgarian fruit and vegetable producers - priority in the future CAP
- New interventions

# Bulgarian F&V Sector support

- 2019 - Strategy for Digitization in Agriculture adopted and currently being implemented
- The Strategic Plan envisaged investments in digital technologies:
  - ✓ Monitoring of the conditions for real-time production development
  - ✓ Precise pest control
  - ✓ Tracking and optimizing the process of shortening the food chains, etc.
- Tools for the development of the Fruit and Vegetables Sector:
  - ✓ Available new generation of sensors connected via the Internet of Things (IoT)
  - ✓ Precise and connected to the Internet and geolocation mechanization
  - ✓ Blockchain distributed computer platforms
  - ✓ Artificial intelligence systems, processing Big Data in real time, etc.
- Pilot project funded under the RDP measure 16.1. “Support for the formation and functioning of operational groups within the European Innovation Partnership” - decentralized system for tracking the origin and quality of goods produced (greenhouse vegetables) through a Blockchain

# National Recovery and Resilience Plan

- Application of precision agriculture
- Optimization of the use of plant waste
- Improvement of fertilizer management
- Application of water-saving technologies
- Increase of energy efficiency
- Use of digital solutions to improve the process of growing crops
- Optimisation of the quantities of plant protection products and fertilizers used
- Introduction of automated and robotic systems for control of the separate phases of the production process
- The indicative costs - about EUR 504 million (about EUR 234 million from the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism and about EUR 270 million national co-financing, including about EUR 224 million private co-financing)

- “Investments in centres for preparation for marketing and storage of fruits and vegetables”:
  - ✓ Creation of short supply chains
  - ✓ Modernization and automation of collection processes
  - ✓ Preparation for market and storage of fresh fruits and vegetables
- “Digital Plant Breeding” - joint project with the Ministry of Education and Science - budget of EUR 4.6 million and deadline of 2024 year
- Activation of the investment processes in agriculture (Recovery and Resilience Mechanism, EU Common Agricultural Policy, etc.)

# Competitiveness and potential of the Bulgarian Fruit and Vegetables Sector

- Increase of competitiveness index in recent years (high competitiveness indices for cherries, plums, grapes, apricots, peaches, peppers, tomatoes and cucumbers)
- Traditions, competitive advantages in production and specialization of the production
- New orchards
- Gradual recovery of production
- Technological renewal
- Digital technologies in agricultural practices
- Market positions are improving
- Good added value
- Dealing with the negative influences of COVID-19
- Support from the EU and the state
- Promising investment sector





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- **Thank you for your attention!**