

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Greece

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Greece - Cyprus Tree Nuts 2010

Report Categories:

Tree Nuts

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Report Highlights:

Greece is the third largest producer of almonds in the EU-27, after Spain and Italy. Per capita consumption of tree nuts in Greece (17 Kg/year) is the highest in the EU - followed by Spain and Italy - and one of the highest in the world. Greece is the major producer of pistachios in the EU. The United States are the main supplier of the Greek almond and pistachio markets, accounting for 78 percent of the total imports. MY 2010/2011 Cypriot almond production is forecast at 550 MT (shelled basis), a significant increase compared to MY 2009/2010 (68 MT). Domestic almond and pistachio demand in Cyprus is mainly satisfied by imports from the United States and Greece, accounting for 90 percent of the total.

General Information:

GREECE - Almonds

PRODUCTION

Table 1: Production, Supply and Demand (MT)

Almonds, Shelled Basis Greece	2008	2009	2010
	Estimates 2008/2009	Estimates 2009/2010	Forecast 2010/2011
	Post Data	Post Data	Post Data
Area Planted	40,000	40,000	40,000
Area Harvested	38,000	38,000	39,000
Production	10,000	8,500	9,000
Imports	8,416	8,114	8,200
Total Supply	18,416	16,614	17,200
Exports	2,536	2,225	2,270
Domestic Consumption	15,880	14,389	14,930
Total Distribution	18,416	16,614	17,200

Source: Unofficial estimates based on Greek industry contacts

Greece is the third largest producer of almonds in the EU-27, after Spain and Italy. Almond cultivation in Greece has a long standing tradition and history. According to industry estimates, there are approximately 40,000 hectares currently cultivated for almonds, including all types of systematically cultivated orchards and a large number of scattered trees (1,000-1-500 MT rarely harvested and mostly consumed on farm).

In the framework of a crop restructuring process which follows the recent Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) implementation, expansion planting of almond trees is highly recommended by the Government of Greece for soils where water availability is limited and farmers do not have plenty of alternative cultivation choices. Therefore, in several pockets of Thessaly, where some water is available, new tree orchards of almonds and pistachios are planted by young farmers, replacing abandoned field crops like cotton, industrial tomatoes, and sugar beets.

The main Greek almond producing areas include five prefectures (Katerini, Serres, Kavala, Magnisia, and Larissa) of Central Macedonia and Thessaly, located in northern Greece. The quality of Greek almonds is considered excellent and the most popular varieties are Ferragnes, Texas, Troito, and Retsou. Ferragnes variety is the favorite and is replacing many traditional ones.

MY 2010/2011 almond production is forecast at 8,500 metric tons (MT) (shelled basis),

significantly down from the previous year (10,000 MT), due to the recent abandonment of unprofitable plantations, not being replaced by profitable ones.

CONSUMPTION

Per capita consumption of tree nuts in Greece (17 Kg/year) is the highest in the EU - followed by Spain and Italy - and one of the highest in the world. MY 2010/2011 almond consumption is forecast at 14,389 MT, down from the previous year (15,880 MT), due to Greece's recession. Greek almond consumption absorbs not only domestic production, but also imported quantities. Almonds represent an important component of the Greek diet. The majority of domestic almond consumption occurs in the form of a snack and, to a lesser extent, as an ingredient for confectionary products, such as ice cream and chocolate.

TRADE

Greece is a net importer of almonds. MY 2009/2010 almond imports to Greece reached 8,114 MT, slightly down from the previous year (8,416 MT), due to Greece's economic crisis. The United States is the main almond supplier to the Greek market, accounting for 75 percent of total imports. U.S. almonds continue to enter the Greek market with highly competitive prices, positively influenced by the value of the U.S. Dollar against the Euro. The Spanish market is also important for Greek almond imports, accounting for 22 percent of the total. Imported almonds are mainly destined for the confectionary, ice cream, and chocolate industries.

Nut crops are less perishable than other fruits. Therefore, imported almonds are destined not only for domestic consumption, but - after being stored, processed, and packaged - are re-exported to third countries, mainly Bulgaria and Cyprus.

Greek authorities have intensified aflatoxin controls on tree nuts, both in the wholesale and retail market chains. Several samples of almonds and pistachios were found by the National Chemical Laboratory to contain aflatoxin in excess of limits allowed by the EU Commission Regulation N. 165/2010, setting maximum levels for certain contaminants in foodstuffs as regards to aflatoxin. Those products were withdrawn from the market and high penalties were imposed on the importing firms and food stores.

Greece exports small amounts of almonds. MY 2009/2010 Greek almonds exports reached 2,225 MT. Bulgaria, Italy, and Cyprus continue to be the main destination for Greek almonds, accounting for 60 percent of the total. Greek almond exports are destined for both the snack and confectionary industry.

GREECE - Pistachios

PRODUCTION

Table 2: Production, Supply and Demand (MT)

Pistachios, Inshell Basis Greece	2008	2009	2010
	Estimates 2008/2009	Estimates 2009/2010	Forecast 2010/2011
	Post Data	Post Data	Post Data
Area Planted	5,122	4900	4900
Area Harvested	5,122	4900	4900
Beginning Stocks	560	486	492
Production	9,000	8,100	8,200
Imports	3,500	3,126	3,235
Total Supply	13,060	11,712	11,927
Exports	934	1,372	1,557
Domestic Consumption	11,666	9,935	9,960
Ending Stocks	460	405	410
Total Distribution	13,060	11,712	11,927

Source: Unofficial estimates based on Greek industry contacts

Greece is the major producer of pistachios in the EU. According to industry estimates, MY 2010/2011 Greek pistachio production is forecast at 8,100 MT, significantly down from the previous year (9,000 MT), due to the fact that Greek farmers are moving away from farming and focusing on more lucrative industries, like tourism and food services. More specifically, Greek farmers are moving away from investing in a tree crop that starts producing only after 8-9 years from planting. Greek pistachios are mainly produced in the Island of Egina and in the area of Lamia, located in central Greece. Due to its exceptional flavor, shapely form, and full kernel, the Aegina pistachio has been awarded by the European Commission as a PDO (Protected Designation of Origin), distinguishing it from all other pistachio varieties world-wide.

CONSUMPTION

MY 2010/2011 Greek pistachio consumption is forecast at 9,935 MT - a decrease of 15 percent compared to the previous year (11,666 MT), as a consequence of the Greek economic downturn. Greek pistachio consumption mainly occurs in the form of a snack food and, to a lesser extent, as an ingredient for confectionary products, such as ice cream and chocolate. Domestic demand is also satisfied by the increasing imports from the United States, accounting for 81 percent of the total.

TRADE

MY 2009/2010 Greek pistachio imports reached 3,126 MT. Greek pistachio imports mainly come from the United States, Iran, and Germany, accounting for 98 percent of the total. Imported pistachios are destined for the confectionary and ice cream sectors. U.S. pistachios continue to enter the Greek market with highly competitive prices, positively influenced by the value of the U.S. Dollar against the Euro. Greece is an emerging exporter. MY 2009/2010 Greek pistachio exports reached 1,372 MT. Cyprus, Italy, and France represent the main destination for Greek pistachios, accounting for 66 percent of the total.

CYPRUS - Almonds

PRODUCTION, SUPPLY, AND DEMAND

Table 3: Production, Supply and, Demand (MT)

Almonds, Shelled Basis Cyprus	2008	2009	2010
	Estimates 2008/2009	Estimates 2009/2010	Forecast 2010/2011
	Post Data	Post Data	Post Data
Area Planted	3,550	4,157	4,157
Area Harvested	3,550	4,157	4,157
Production	68	550	550
Imports	755	1,116	1,200
Total Supply	823	1,666	1,750
Exports	0	0	0
Domestic Consumption	823	1,666	1,750
Total Distribution	823	1,666	1,750

Source: FAOSTAT

According to FAOSTAT, there are approximately 4,157 hectares in Cyprus currently cultivated for almonds, including all types of systematically cultivated orchards and a large number of scattered trees. The main producing areas are the villages of Limnatis and Moniatis, located in southern Cyprus. MY 2010/2011 Cypriot almond production is forecast at 550 MT (shelled basis), a significant increase compared to MY 2009/2010 (68 MT). MY 2010/2011 Cypriot almond consumption is forecast at 1,666 MT – a significant increase compared to MY 2009/2010 (823 MT), due to a growing production. Domestic demand is mainly satisfied by imports that in MY 2009/2010 reached 1,116 MT. The United States and Greece are the main suppliers of the Cypriot market, accounting for 90 percent of the total. No data is available for Cypriot almond exports.

CYPRUS - Pistachios

PRODUCTION, SUPPLY, AND DEMAND

Table 4: Production, Supply and, Demand (MT)

Pistachios, Inshell Basis Cyprus	2008	2009	2010
	Estimates 2008/2009	Estimates 2009/2010	Forecast 2010/2011
	Post Data	Post Data	Post Data
Area Planted	110	115	115
Area Harvested	110	115	115
Production	25	40	45
Imports	345	510	520
Total Supply	370	550	565
Exports	49	60	65
Domestic Consumption	321	490	500
Total Distribution	370	550	565

Source: FAOSTAT

MY 2010/2011 Cypriot pistachio production is small and forecast at 40 MT - an increase of 60 percent compared to MY 2009/2010 (25 MT) that was influenced by the severe drought afflicting Cyprus over the past few years. Cypriot pistachio crop covers an area of 115 hectares, to reflect current estimates. The main producing area is Korfi, a village located in southern Cyprus. Like with almonds, pistachio domestic demand is mainly satisfied by imports that in MY 2009/2010 reached 510 MT. Cypriot pistachio imports mainly come from the United States, Iran, and Greece. Pistachio imports are not only for domestic consumption, but after being stored, processed, and packaged, are re-exported to third countries, mainly Iran, the United States, and Egypt. MY 2009/2010 exports reached 60 MT.