

13. Agriculture

The agricultural sector has also been profoundly damaged by the on-going economic crisis, but nevertheless, in terms of values at current prices of the quantities produced, has shown signs of recovery, invoicing almost 50,000 million Euros in 2012. At the same time, the value of agricultural produce in Sicily in 2012 rose by 8.1% over the previous year, thus continuing an upward trend established over the previous months and confirming this sector to be rather significant in the Regional economy.

In economic terms the value of the crops amounted to over 4,330 million Euros, accounting for 8.7% of the national total. Over the last year value added in the sectors of agriculture, forestry and fishing was estimated (at current prices) at about 3,049 million Euros, which was 200 million above that of the previous year. When compared to the figure for Italy as a whole, the market-share of this sector rose from 10.1% in 2011 to 10.8% last year (2012).

With regard to agricultural crops, which registered overall growth of +8.5% in 2012, there was a slight (-2.3%) fall in the quantity of grass and forage products and a notable increase in wood products (+20.5%), in line with previous trends characterized by the typicality of the crops. Detailed analysis shows that the durum wheat crop went from 7,982,000 quintals in 2011, to 8,357,000 in the following year, representing a 4.7% increase. There were increases in potato crops (+5.1%), oranges (+11.4%), mandarins (+11.3%) and table grapes (+5.1%). On the other hand, compared to 2011, there was a fall in production of tomatoes (-26.7%), courgettes (-48.2%) and watermelon (-47.4%), whilst peppers, artichokes and olive-oil remained at the same levels. Overall wine production in 2012 was much higher than in the previous year, rising to a figure of a little over 4,500 million hectoliters (+11.3%); although there was a -13.3% fall in table-wine production, which in a single year went from a figure of 1,513 to 1,312 hectolitres, DOC and DOCG wine production registered a 1% increase and, above all, IGT quantities were up by 26.9%. The latter constitutes the largest share of wine produced in Sicily (67.2% against an average national figure of 32.8%). For DOC and DOCG wines the figure of 3.6% needs to be compared to the national figure of 41.9%. In practice, Sicily produces a little over one eighth of all Italian table wine, about a quarter of the IGT production and only 1% of DOC and DOCG wines.

Up to July 2012, over 312,000 hectares of land destined for agricultural cultivation in Sicily was used for growing cereals, 164,000 for growing olives, 130,000 for vineyards and 91,000 hectares for citrus groves. Provisional data per Province shows a marked concentration of land used for cereal production in the Province of Palermo (28.3% of the total in Sicily) and in Enna (16%),

whereas Messina, with a mere 1,730 hectares devotes only 0.5% of land to cereals. Mainly because of its particular altitude the latter Province allocates most of its agricultural land to olive-production (35,150 hectares), whereas it is no surprise to find that, in Trapani, over 64,000 hectares are deployed as vineyards, accounting for 49.5% of the total land used for this cultivation in Sicily.

Between 2008 and 2012 the value of agricultural production in real terms showed a relatively slight fall but with a directly contrasting trend; a fall in the first years, followed by a rise in the two subsequent years. Livestock production, which showed similar trends, increased by 10.7%, probably because of the increase in consumption registered for pork and poultry. There was also a reduction in cow and buffalo milk (-10.5% between 2009 and 2012) whereas sheep and goat milk production continued to increase in quantity (+5.1%).

As regards organic agriculture, from data for 2012 provided by the OdG and the SINAB, there were over 7,918 organic farms operating in Sicily (16% of the national total), which represented a notable fall of -6% when compared to the previous year. Analysis by type of farm shows a marked concentration in the production sector in both Sicily and at the national level, and a general absence of enterprises devoted to importing organic food products.

In 2011 the number of agritourism enterprises in the Region increased by 20, arriving at a total of 536, with sleeping accommodation for 9,619 (+3.1% over 2010). On the basis of data analyzed, with regard to specific facilities, farms which offer full-board seem to be the norm (345 agritourism enterprises) followed by those that provide half-board (92); these two provide 88.7% of beds available. Agritourism enterprises in Sicily have an average of about 18 beds, as against 12.5 at the national level.

Glossary

Agricultural holding: economic/technical unit of land (also in non-contiguous plots), and also (possibly) a variety of equipment and installations, where agriculture, the production of wood and livestock-farming is carried out by the tenant (farmer, company, body).

Agriculturally utilised land (AUL): total area of land devoted to seed crops, family vegetable-gardens, permanent meadow and pasture, tree-growing and fruit-bearing chestnut groves. It constitutes the area allocated for proper agricultural cultivation and actually used for this purpose. It does not include the areas set aside for mushrooms in caves, cellars or appropriately-designated buildings.

Agritourism: adaptation and utilisation of rural buildings, in which agricultural entrepreneurs provide accommodation for tourists.

Dead-weight: for cattle and horses, this figure refers to the skinned carcass, including kidneys and their fat, but without the head, the vital organs of the thorax and abdomen, feet and tail, and with “loss through cooling” also detracted; for pigs, sheep and goats the dead-weight also includes the head and feet, with the vital organs and “loss through cooling” again detracted.

DOC and DOCG wines: wine obtained (from vines) from vineyards whose surface area is recorded in the Register of Vineyards instituted by the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture, for the production of wines of controlled denomination of origin (DOC) and guaranteed controlled denomination of origin (DOCG).

Organic farm: a farm using agricultural systems that encourage the production of food and fibre in a socially, economically and environmentally healthy manner. The productive capacity of these systems is based on the intrinsic fertility of the soil, allied to respect for nature, plants, animals and the countryside, and the thorough exploitation of all these separate factors.

Sowable land: area utilised for growing graminoid and herbaceous plants, subject to crop rotation, which envisages a maximum duration of five years’ utilization.

Further reading

Publications

Italian Statistical Yearbook 2013- ISTAT

Agro-environmental indicators: methodologies, data needs and availability – ISTAT

Waste statistics in agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors – ISTAT

Italian Agricultural Yearbook - INEA

Foreign trade in agro-alimentary products - 2006- 2007-INEA

Italian Agro-alimentary Outlook - Annual report – ISMEA

Internet

www.inea.it

Italian Agriculture Counts 2013
Report on the state of Italian agriculture

www.istat.it

Value added for agriculture by Region - 1980-2010
Structure and production of agricultural holdings - 2007
Territorial indicator system – Area Agriculture
Short-term data – Annual data for cultivation
Short-term data - Annual data for live-stock quantities
Short-term data - Annual data on means of production
Short-term data – Annual and monthly data on milk and cheese production
Short-term data on forest surface areas and utilization
Short-term data – Annual data for hunting
Short-term data – Annual data for floriculture
Short-term data – Annual data for fishing
Agritourism enterprises in Italy
Italian Statistical Yearbook 2013 – Chapter 13: “Agriculture

<http://agri.istat.it/>

IT system regarding Agriculture and Animal Husbandry

www.politicheagricole.it

DOP and IGP products data-bank
DOC, DOCG, IGT wine data-bank
Traditional agro-alimentary products data-bank
Fishing and hydroponics data-bank
Agro-alimentary sector data-bank

www.sinab.it

National single system for Organic Agriculture

www.starnet.unioncamere.it

(thematic areas – agriculture – analysis and data)
Economic accounts – value added and gross fixed investments
Foreign trade and market shares. Map of Provincial competitiveness.
Stillbirths of enterprises registered at the Chamber of Commerce

www.corpoforestale.it

Statistics on forest fires

www.ense.it

Geographical distribution of officially-controlled areas for seed-crop production

www.ismea.it

Price survey – agro-alimentary product prices in over 300 markets

Business trends and situations – short-term notes, studies on consumption,
climate investigations and situational analysis

Economic-financial analysis

www.agricolturaitalianaonline.gov.it

On-line journal from the Ministry of Agricultural, Alimentary and Forestry
Policy

www.inran.it

Data-bank of alimentary composition

Database “Quality of varieties of wheat grown in Italy”

www.irepa.org

Economic observatory on productive structures for sea-fishing in Italy