

13 – AGRICULTURE

On the basis of the last available data, there were about 237,270 agricultural holdings in Sicily in 2007, covering a total surface area of 1,251,850 hectares and representing 14.1% of all such enterprises (1,679,439) operating in Italy. Going through a period of recession, agricultural production in Sicily in 2009 fell by 9.3% when compared to the previous year, 2008, but nonetheless maintains an important Regional role. In economic terms the value of the harvest exceeded 3,700 million Euros, representing 8.5% of the national total.

At the same time, value added in the sectors of agriculture, forestry and fishing was estimated (at current prices) at a little more than 2,600 million Euros (10.4% of the national figure), which was much lower (-10.5%) than the previous year, the fall in real terms being 4%.

With regard to agriculture, figures remained more or less stable with regard to the quantity of wood products, whereas graminoid and grass produce underwent a sharp drop of 10.9%. The durum wheat harvest in particular fell from 9,146,000 quintals in 2008 to 6,122,000 in the following year, representing a 33.1% loss. Tomato (-19.4%) and courgette (-13.4%) production was also down, whilst orange production saw an increase (+14.5%) as did carrots (+17.9%) and artichokes (+12.8%). Production of table-grapes remained stable, along with mandarins, lemons and eggs. Overall wine production in 2009 remained at the same level as the previous year, at almost 5 million hectolitres. Of these, DOC and DOCG wine production together showed a drop of -7.4%, followed by table-wines (-6.7%). However, the latter continues to constitute the largest share of wine produced in Sicily (61% against an average national figure of 36.6%). Once again, in spite of the improvements in quality in recent years, Regional wine production is still inclined towards supplying the semi-finished product to the wine-making industry in other Regions, which is to the detriment of its own more prized wines. In practice, Sicily produces a little under a fifth

of all Italian table wine, about a seventh of the IGT production and only 1.4% of DOC and DOCG wines.

Live-stock production in 2009 more or less maintained the same levels as the previous year as regards pork production, whereas there was a fall in bovine production, and, on the contrary, a 2.2% increase with regard to poultry. In the last year considered, about 20% of land destined for agricultural cultivation in Sicily was used for sowing cereals (258,000 hectares), 13% for olives (160,000), 12% for vineyards (148,000) and about 8% for citrus groves. Data per Province shows a marked concentration of cereal production in the Province of Palermo (29.7% of the whole) and in Enna (16.4%), whereas Messina, with a mere 1,399 hectares utilised, produces only 0.5% of cereals in Sicily. The latter Province allocates most of its agricultural land to olive-production (22.6% of total Sicilian production), followed by Agrigento and Palermo (16% and 14.3% respectively). In Trapani 69,000 hectares are taken up by vineyards, accounting for 46.5% of the total land used for this cultivation in Sicily.

Between 2005 and 2009 there was an accumulated fall of about 8.4% in agricultural cultivation, whereas live-stock production rose by 3%. More specifically, beef production remained stable; at the same time pork production increased by 9.8% as did poultry by 12.1%. There was a 6.7% increase in the production of milk from cow and buffalo.

As for organic agriculture, from data up to 2009 provided by the OdG and the SINAB, there were over 7,400 organic farms operating in Sicily (representing 15.3% of the national total), which represented a rise (+6.1%) 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 2009 the number of agritourism enterprises in the Region increased by 73, arriving at a total of 486, with sleeping places for 8,811 (+16.1% over 2008). On the basis of data analysed, with regard to specific facilities, places which offer full-board seem to be the norm (306 agritourism enterprises) along with those that provide half-board (99); these two provide 92.8% of beds available. Each enterprise in Sicily has an average of about 18 beds, as against 12 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)/Utilised agricultural areas (UAA): 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’ utilisation.

Further reading

Publications

Italian Statistical Yearbook 2010- ISTAT

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

Waste statistics on 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 2010
Report on the state of Italian agriculture

www.istat.it

Value added for agriculture by Region - 1980-2008
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 utilisation
Short-term data – Annual data for hunting
Short-term data – Annual data for floriculture
Short-term data – Annual data for fishing
Agri-tourism enterprises in Italy
Italian Statistical Yearbook 2010 – Chapter 13: “Agriculture

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
Agri-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. A map of provincial competitiveness.
Stillbirths of companies registered with the Chamber of Commerce

www.corpoforestale.it

Statistics for forest-fires

www.ense.it

Geographical distribution of area officially controlled for seed production

www.ismea.it

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

Business trends and situations – related 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