

13 – AGRICULTURE

In the agricultural year (November 2006 – October 2007) there were about 237,000 agricultural holdings in Sicily (4.7% fewer than the corresponding figure for 2005), covering a total surface area of a little over 1,251,000 hectares. In the country as a whole, there were about 1,680,000 agricultural holdings, which represented a 2.8% drop over the year 2005.

In 2007 agricultural production in Sicily generated a sum of almost 3.8 thousand million Euros, equalling the previous year's figure. Live-stock production showed an increase over the year 2006 (463 million Euros as against 448 million).

Value added in the sectors of agriculture, forestry and fishing was estimated at a little less than 2,900 million Euros (10.2% of the national figure), which was a little lower (-0.8%) than the previous year; in evaluations at constant prices there was a 1.4% loss in real terms.

With regard to agriculture, there was a 3.7% decrease in quantity. There was a considerable 8.4% decline in wood products and a slight 1.4% increase in graminoid and grass produce. The *durum* wheat harvest provided 8,414,000 quintals (representing a 11.1% increase). On the contrary orange production (11,444,000 quintals) saw a decrease of 9.6% and tomatoes (6,017,000 quintals) a 0.7% fall. The figures for table grapes also showed a 3.1% fall (3,551,000 quintals). Overall wine production in 2006 exceeded 3.9 million hectolitres as against 5.5 million in the previous year (-29.1%). Of these the DOC and DOCG wines together showed the sharpest fall (-38.8%), followed by table-wines (-31.1%). The production of IGT wines (Indicazione Geografica Tipica) showed less of a drop (-21%). 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 2007 table wine accounted for 67% of the total against a national average of 35.8%. As regards the remaining types, whilst the quantities are more or less the same for IGT labels, the meagre 3.9% figure for DOC and DOCG wines pales in comparison with the 34.8% national figure. In practice, Sicily produces a little under a fifth of all Italian table wine, about a tenth of the IGT production and less than 1% of DOC and DOCG wines.

Live-stock products, which in real terms showed identical figures when compared to 2006, saw a 3% increase in beef and pork production and a more marked increase with regard to poultry (17.3%), whereas the amount of milk obtained from cows fell slightly by 0.7% .

Data for individual provinces confirmed Catania and Messina as among the areas with the greatest vocation for agriculture and livestock-rearing in Italy. On the basis of estimates from the Istituto Tagliacarne, in 2006 the value added produced in the two Provinces in the sectors of agriculture, forestry and fishing amounted to more than 520 million Euros for the former, and 500 million for the latter, together accounting for over one third of agricultural and live-stock production in Sicily. Lower figures were recorded for Ragusa (425 million Euros), Enna (334) and Trapani (329), whereas Palermo (177) and Agrigento (161) came bottom of the list.

In the last five-year period there was an accumulated increase of 20.4% in agricultural cultivation, due almost exclusively to graminoid and grass production (+42.5%). On the other hand, live-stock products decreased by -7.9%, partly as a result of continual health scares; there was a 7.3% reduction in the quantity of beef produced, and there was a 27.5% drop in production of milk from cow and buffalo, and a 44.6% fall in milk from sheep and goats.

As for organic agriculture, the data provided by the OdG (control organism) and the SINAB (National System of Information regarding Organic Agriculture) placed Sicily first among the Regions with regard to the number of organic farms: in 2006 the number of operators was around 8,100 (15.9% of the national total) which represented a slight drop (-4%) when compared to 2005. Analysis by type of farm shows a marked concentration in the production sector in both Sicily and at the national level.

In 2007 the number of agri-tourism enterprises in the Region increased by 40, arriving at a total of 383, with sleeping places for 6,996 (+10.8% over 2006). With regard to specific facilities, places which offer full-board seem to be the norm (237 agri-tourism enterprises with 4,576 beds), along with those that provide half-board (91 with 1,869 beds); each activity 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.

Agri-tourism: 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 2008- ISTAT –
Agro-environmental indicators: methodologies, data needs and availability – ISTAT
Waste statistics on agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors – ISTAT
Italian Agricultural Yearbook – 2006 –2007- INEA
Foreign trade in agro-alimentary products - 2006- 2007-INEA
Italian Agro-alimentary Outlook - Annual report – ISMEA

Internet

www.inea.it

Italian Agriculture Counts 2008
Report on the state of Italian agriculture – 2006

www.istat.it

Value added for agriculture by Region - 1980-2006
Structure and production of agricultural holdings - 2005
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
Agro-tourist enterprises in Italy
Italian Statistical Yearbook 2008 – 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
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. 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