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Greece – 2021 Chestnut production

By Stefanos Diamandis

Greece is a mountainous country. Sixty per cent (60%) of its land is covered with mountains. Chestnut grows at an altitude of approx. 300 to 1,000 m. The total area covered with chestnut (orchards and forest) is estimated to be 32,000 ha.

The entrance of chestnut blight in 1963 has been a major drawback in chestnut cultivation. Chestnut growers abandoned their orchards and migrated in order to make a living. In the last 35 years the area of cultivated orchards ranged from 7,500 to 9,000 ha. Over the last 10 years there has been a tendency to start new orchards and revive abandoned orchards by intense cultivation.

Although the orchard area did not increase significantly, the national chestnut production has sharply surged from approx. 20,000 tonnes in the period 1961- 2013 to reach 38,000 tonnes in 2019. My explanation is that the control of chestnut blight on a national scale quickly improved the health of trees and increased the production.

The prediction on the chestnut production for 2021 is negative. The summer was particularly dry resulting in smaller nuts and in early October two weeks of stormy weather resulted in a significant loss. The percentage of split nuts also increased. **The national chestnut production in 2021 will be reduced by approx. 40% and is not expected to exceed 25-28,000 tonnes.**