

PRODUCTIONS & MARKETS

From the undergrowth, valuable chains in good health

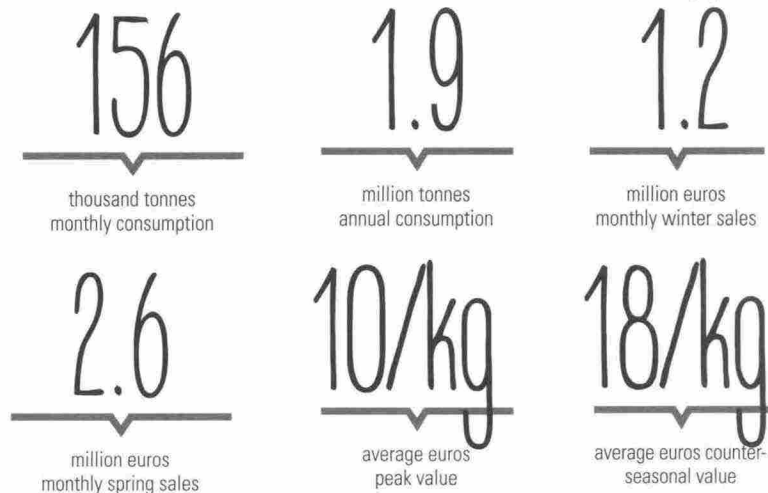
The consumption of small berries driven by the most recent trends in food well-being is growing in all markets and intercepts interesting results also in Italy



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For many they are wild berries, technically it is better to call them small fruits; in practice, they are a heterogeneous group of crops, mostly shrubby underwood species and real trees, such as mulberries. Among the best known we include raspberry, currant, blueberry, blackberry, and mulberry. We add cranberry.

In Italy, the consumption of these berries has grown over the last ten years. This phenomenon is certainly linked to the health trend that has long been involving the agri-food sector. Therefore these products represent an increasingly interesting market niche in the Italian fruit and vegetables panorama, with very



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But let us consider some data on the Italian consumption of these products. According to the Vsafe research, between May 2015 and June 2018, purchases of wild berries showed a medium-term upward trend, both in terms of volumes (quantities and packages purchased) and value. The percentage change in the analyzed time period was equal to + 113% in terms of volumes, + 78% in value, and + 94% in packages sold. The monthly average consumption of small fruits, according to the latest data available (July 2017- June 2018) amounted to 156 tonnes, corresponding to 1.9 million Euros. The minimum value was reached in January 2018 (86 tonnes for 1.2 million Euros), while the maximum in April of the same year (223 tonnes for 2.6 million Euros). Considering the trend of the average monthly unit value for wild berries, it is possible to notice that in periods of higher consumption the value decreases, reaching around € 10 / kg. The range in which the average unit value of these products moves is between a minimum of € 8 / kg and a maximum of € 18 / kg.



FILIERE DAL SOTTOBOSCO

Per molti sono i frutti di bosco, tecnicamente è meglio chiamarli piccoli frutti; in pratica si tratta di un gruppo eterogeneo di colture, per la maggior parte specie arbustive da sottobosco e veri e propri alberi quali i gelsi. Tra i maggiormente conosciuti annoveriamo il lampone, il ribes, il mirtillo, le more di rovo e le more di gelso. Aggiungiamo il cranberry o ossicocco.

In Italia, negli ultimi dieci anni, il consumo di queste bacche è registrato in crescita. Un fenomeno certamente legato al trend salutistico che sta coinvolgendo da tempo il settore agroalimentare. Già nel 2017, la produzione di questi frutti ha registrato +25% rispetto all'anno precedente e ben +56% rispetto al 2010; oltre a un aumento delle superfici coltivate passate dai 700 ettari nel 2010 ai 1.300 ettari nel 2017; Fonte: Vsafe, uno spin-off dell'Università Cattolica di Piacenza. Tra maggio 2015 e giugno 2018, gli acquisti di frutti di bosco hanno mostrato un trend di medio periodo al rialzo, pari al +113% in termini di volumi, +78% in valore e +94% in confezioni vendute. Il range in cui si muove il valore medio unitario di questi prodotti è compreso tra un minimo di 8 €/kg e un massimo di 18 €/kg.

interesting economic results compared to other crops.

At the same time, always taking the last decade as a reference point, as a consequence of the growing interest of consumers, there has also been strong growth in production in Italy. Let us see some data published by Vsafe, spin-off of the Catholic University of Piacenza. Already in 2017, the production of these fruits recorded + 25% compared to the previous year and even + 56% compared to 2010, in addition to a growth in cultivated areas, increased from 700 hectares in 2010 to 1,300 hectares in 2017. The value concerning production is also increasing: in 2016 it reached 26 million Euros (+ 38% compared to 2011 vintage), attributable to the increase in the average annual price of small fruits (excluding strawberries), which is around € 6.07 / kg (+ 3% compared to 2011).

Now let us try to contextualize these dynamics

in a wider context. Both production and consumption of small fruits is increasing all over the world, with greater consumption in the United Kingdom, Northern Europe, and the USA. Although with lower results, Italy is also showing increasing consumer dynamics, with increases in sales by 10.9% in value and 18.3% in volume.

As the Vsafe research indicates, consumption habits in Italy are still linked to a strong seasonality and only in second place to a real healthy food fashion, although we can appreciate a significant increase in the consumption of small fruits in general, especially related to blueberries and raspberries, which drive sales. In fact, among small fruits, consumers prefer blueberry, which in Italy concerns about 48% of sales, also favoured by large-scale retail trade thanks to better shelf life compared to raspberries, blackberries, and currants. •