Tomato processing in Greece

Greece accounts for about 8% of the tonnage processed in AMITOM countries, with 600 000 tonnes processed on average over the last five years.

Currently, most of the growing and processing is carried out in three geographical areas:

- the Central region (Thessalia and Beotia), with about 75% of the production;
- the Peloponnese which accounts for about 15% of the production.
- the Northern Region (Macedonia-Thrace), with about 10% of the production;

Greece is a very mountainous country and agricultural acreage only covers a little more of 10% of the total surface of the country. Processing tomatoes are mainly grown in plains close to rivers and lakes or in regions surrounded by mountains. Sprinkler irrigation is quite spread accounting for more than 70 % and still growing.
Soils are medium type with variable predominance of clay and sand rich in organic matter and well drained. Fields are varying from area to area, with the more traditional areas around 10 hectares and the newest areas around 25 hectares.

Seeds utilized are almost 100 % hybrids with main suppliers being Heinz seeds, ISI, Esanem and Nunhems. Direct seeding is around 10%, while transplants now dominate especially in areas looking for an earlier harvest and account for about 90 % of the surfaces. Machine harvesting has grown at a fast rate and about 95 % of the tomatoes are now mechanically harvested.

Thanks to the intensive work carried out by both factories and local growers organizations, the yields and fruit quality are steadily increasing.

There are currently about fifteen tomato processing factories in Greece, with the four largest handling 75 % of the total volume.

The price of raw material was the last couple of years, around 80 Euros per metric tonnes, a good average European price.

The Greek production is predominantly export oriented (about 80 %). The majority is high quality industrially packed tomato products, like paste, diced, sauces etc. in aseptic / bulk packaging. Major export markets are E.U., Japan and Gulf countries. A significant part is also packed in retail sizes destined both to domestic market as well as to exports.

The negative impact of the European strategy for subsidies is more emphasized in the case of Greece , which coupled with the economic crisis the country is facing lately , has caused the temporary intense drop down of the production the last couple of years. However this has led to the restructuring of the Greek industry which now is concentrated in fewer but stronger industries and in highly productive areas, promising efficient, low cost production with high quality diversified products.

The Greek industry is represented within the AMITOM by PEK, the Greek Canners Association. Established in 1945, it is a founding member of AMITOM. Its members companies account for more than 90 % of the total Greek production.

ANNEE	Production de tomates transformées (1000 tonnes)	Volume transformé (index 100 en 78)	Volume transformé (en % AMITOM)
1978/79	1 029	100%	18,50%
1979/80	1084	105%	15,80%
1980/81	1445	140%	21,50%
1981/82	1124	109%	17,00%
1982/83	1008	98%	15,20%
1983/84	1075	104%	13,10%
1984/85	1484	144%	13,90%
1985/86	1318	128%	15,10%
1986/87	706	69%	11,70%
1987/88	825	80%	13,10%
1988/89	961	93%	13,80%
1989/90	1308	127%	14,40%
1990/91	1059	103%	12,00%
1991/92	1129	110%	13,80%
1992/93	913	89%	12,50%
1993/94	1028	100%	13,60%
1994/95	1111	108%	12,50%
1995/96	1177	114%	12,50%
1996/97	1311	127%	12,60%
1997/98	1183	115%	13,90%
1998/99	1248	121%	11,40%
99/2000	1250	121%	10,20%
2000/01	1062	103%	9,60%
2001/02	939	91%	9,15%
2002/03	860	84%	11,02%
2003/04	985	91%	11,23%
2004/05	1200	117%	10,57%
2005/06	850	83%	6,50%
YEAR	**Processing tomato production (1000 tonnes)**	**Evolution of the processed volume (index 100 in 1978)**	**Evolution of the processed volume (in % AMITOM)**