

The fruit-growing and horticulture sector is in urgent need of assistance

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Due to the severe condition of the sector this year – poor harvest, adverse natural and climatic conditions and the Russian embargo, there is a need for urgent actions and measures in order to minimize the losses of agricultural producers. On 12 July (today) in Stara Zagora an emergency meeting of the management of the four major fruit-growing unions in Bulgaria is being convened. Only a few days ago, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food also defined additional temporary emergency measures to support producers of certain types of fruit and vegetables.

Moscow responded to the extension of the Western sanctions imposed because of the conflict with Ukraine by extending until the end of 2017 the ban on imports of food and agricultural products from the European Union, the United States and several other countries into Russia. And while, according to most analysts, the sanctions in the agricultural sector refresh and lead to

stimulation of Russian agriculture, the losses for a country such as Bulgaria are significant. From the beginning of the Russian embargo in August 2014 until January 2016, Bulgarian agriculture in individual sectors has lost nearly 300 million leva in revenue.

In connection with the extension by one more year of the period of application of the Russian ban on imports of certain agricultural products, including fruit and vegetables, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food has defined additional temporary emergency measures to support producers of certain types of fruit and vegetables. The published draft Ordinance amending and supplementing Ordinance No. 6 of 2014 on the conditions and procedure for the application of temporary emergency measures to support the market in the fruit and vegetable sector will support primarily producers of *tomatoes, carrots, peppers, cucumbers, apples, pears, plums, dessert grapes, kiwifruit, oranges, clementines, mandarins, lemons, cabbage, cauliflower, mushrooms and soft fruit*.

At the insistence of Bulgaria and as a result of lengthy negotiations, *cherries with CN code 0809 29 00* have also been added to this list.

When withdrawn from the market and when the cherries are provided to charitable organizations or foundations, schools, kindergartens, children's camps, medical establishments, homes for the elderly or places of deprivation of liberty, producers will receive compensation for the production in the amount of EUR 48.14 per 100 kg, including transport costs.

When the cherries are withdrawn from the market and provided as animal feed, the compensation will be EUR 16.045 per 100 kg, and if they are destroyed in the field it will be EUR 14.44 per 100 kg.

Producers of vegetables and fruit may apply for support through additional implementation of the measure for withdrawal from the market for the free provision of vegetables and fruit by 30 June 2017.

Due to the severe condition of the sector this year, Bulgarian producers decided to unite and find common solutions when considering the problems in the sector. Therefore, on 12 July (today) in Stara Zagora, at the initiative of the Danube Fruit Growers Union, an emergency meeting of the management of the four major fruit-growing unions in Bulgaria will be held. The meeting will be attended by the National Union of Gardeners, the Bulgarian Association of Raspberry Producers, the National Association of Potato Producers and the Bulgarian Association of Greenhouse Producers.