The campaign of melon and watermelon in CLM starts with prices below the cost of production

The beginning of the campaign of melon and watermelon in Castilla-La Mancha has recorded as main incidences the reduction of the surface in these crops and the very low prices at origin that, especially in the melon, do not cover the costs of production. On the other hand, the productive forecasts, even provisional, indicate that in recent years, the melon has been losing ground against watermelon.

Data that have been released in the sector of Melon and Sandia of Cooperatives Agro-food Castilla-La Mancha, held this week in Tomelloso (Ciudad Real) to analyze the current situation of the sector and the most important aspects Of the newly launched campaign.

The spokesperson for melons and watermelon Cooperatives, Jose Angel Serrano, has indicated that *"the most significant of this campaign start, unfortunately, are prices, which today are very low, below production costs, over all in the melon "*, as witnessed by the first session of the Lonja Hortofrutícola del Melón and the Watermelon held in Manzanares (Ciudad Real).

> The harvest of this year has been advanced due to the successive weeks of intense heat recorded and that in regions such as Murcia continue to produce product, so that the La Mancha campaign has overlapped with that of this Community

Regarding production forecasts, depending on the use of each of the two official data sources (MAPAMA and JCCM), in the region, between 7,500 and 8,800 hectares of melon were planted in 2017 and between 3,300 and 2,700 hectares Of watermelon, which would yield an approximate harvest in melon of 270,000 tons, a figure below the average of the last quinquennium; and in watermelon, 135,000 tons, an amount higher than the one recorded in 2016.

> The forecasts of production - very provisional - indicate that the melon loses ground with respect to the watermelon, phenomenon that has been observed for some years

José Ángel Serrano considers this setback to be worrying, because melon is an alternative crop "that is not currently profitable and many farmers are withdrawing from it". Regarding the low prices, he expects that with the passage of the weeks and already in the middle of August, "prices will recover and reach sustainable levels."

Source: Agro-food cooperatives of Castilla-La Mancha

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