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## Turkey to lead pasta exports

Ranking currently second in pasta exports in the world Turkey aims top of the list by overcoming Italy.

Established in 1993 Turkey's Pasta Industrialists Association serves for the development of the sector with its 25 pasta-producing members. Mr. Abdülkadir Külâhçıoğlu, who was elected as member of the board of the association last year, answered our questions about pasta production of Turkey. Pointing out that Turkey ranks third in pasta exports in the world, Külâhçıoğlu underlined that Turkey ranks first in pasta exports in non-European countries. He also added that they have a major target of exporting 2 million tons of pasta yielding revenue of 1 billion dollars in 2023. The interview follows:

### Can you furnish us about the activities of Pasta Industrialists Association?

Our association has been supporting and offering solutions to our members from their problems up to developing the seeds of

our farmers through the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of European Union Affairs and related establishments. We have been continuing our efforts at this regard with public enterprises. We are also undertaking the training work in domestic market to increase pasta consumption because pasta is a very healthy product. But the consumption level in Turkey is not at the right place.



There are 20 active pasta factories in the sector. We have a volume of one billion dollars. The sector provides employment for 30 thousand people. Our association is a member of International Pasta Organization (IPO). We are representing Turkey at world pasta days celebrated in different countries at every October 25. In fact, this celebrity is a gift of our association to the sector in the world. The people who brought this idea to the agenda at the first world congress in 1995 were the Turkish delegates. Later, the idea was accepted in a meeting in America in 1997. Since then the world pasta day is celebrated with various activities.

### **You said that pasta is a healthy product. Can you detail this a little bit? What are the benefits of pasta?**

Since it is product of quality carbohydrates and absorbed by the blood slowly, it activates the metabolism. So, it delays feeling hungry. The last nutrition what racers, sports people and art people eat is pasta. It is an inevitable dish at the nutrition programs of difficult sports such as swimming and bicycling. There is a wrong perception as pasta causes putting on weight but it is not correct. In the contrary it is a product rich of iron, calcium and phosphor thanks to the vitamins such as A, B1 and B2 pasta naturally has. These come directly from the nature, from the wheat itself.

### **What is the export case of Turkish pasta? What is our rank in the world pasta exports?**

The pasta industry is an important sector for our country. We are a wheat-rich country. We rank third in hard wheat in the world after Canada and Italy. We rank third in pasta production also after the same countries but we rank second after Italy in exports. In fact, there is no reason we can't be the first largest pasta exporter in the world. The only obstacle in this is the quota imposed by European Union. Turkey's export volume to 28 EU countries is limited by 20 thousand tons in a year. We are in an intensive effort with the Ministry of Economy to increase this quota. The import value of these 28 countries is 3.7 billion dollars. Turkey can get a little share as only 17 million dollars from this volume. This represents less than 1%. When this quota is eliminated this figure will jump up and there will be no obstacle for the Turkish pasta.

### **We are ahead of Italy outside sheltered markets**

When we don't consider sheltered markets we rank first in world pasta exports. Italy's main exports go to European countries. When we don't consider EU countries, Italy exports 350 tons while Turkey does around 700 thousand tons, which mark double of Italy's.

### **Where do we realize these exports?**

We are now exporting to 142 countries. We have no problem at this regard. But we have another problem in addition to the EU quotas; it is the USA. There is a restriction in the USA, too, originating from antidumping and compensated taxes. A review meeting is held once every five years to consider eliminating that restriction. We didn't make country-defense in past two meetings. In the last one we made a defense in collaboration with exporters' unions and Ministry of Economy by according with a law office. Although we couldn't succeed, we made a pace. It is realized with the votes of 6 countries and all we need is the approval of 4 countries. We have already the positive votes of two countries. We will do our best to get the votes of 4 countries. America is a prestigious market for us. Very huge exports are not expected even when these problems are overcome. It is a difficult market a must-be in market. We don't want any obstacle for our sector.

**What is the case of pasta production in Turkey? Do we have hygienic production conditions? Do you, as the association, make any controls or inspections?**

Turkey's pasta sector has recorded an outstanding progress in the last decade. There have been remarkable increases in both domestic and foreign sales. The increase in exports has almost been 6 folds and double in domestic market in the last decade. The main reasons for this incredible development are the producers increased their capacities and they made technologic renewals. Many of the factories renewed their technologies and the total production capacity was raised to 2 million. We have no quality problem at all. The reason why we get the markets from Italy is our quality production.

**2023 target is 1 billion dollars**

We are currently up to 735 thousand tons in exports. Our short run target is to increase this up to 1 million tons but our major target is to bring it up to 2 million tons by 2023. This means almost 1.5 billion dollars.

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