

# POLICY BRIEF

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## The future of pear in Emilia Romagna

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Italy with over 700 thousand t/year is by far the largest pear producer in the EU28 holding about 30% of the production of pears.

The majority of the Italian production is concentrated in a limited area of the Po Valley, in the provinces of Modena, Ferrara, Bologna and Ravenna, therefore (ISTAT, 2016). In this range pear has found in the Po Valley an ideal environment of cultivation from the beginning of the 1900s together with a strong traditional know how of local producers.

However, the future of the pear sector is under threat in a number of ways due to barriers to export, incoming phytopathogens, environmental concerns, high fragmentation of the supply chain and decrease in consumption.

This brief has been developed from research conducted as part of the H2020-funded project, SUFISA. It aims to give an overview of an in depth study carried out on pear sector in Emilia Romagna Region. For that purposes literature review, a series of interviews, focus groups and workshops were conducted between March 2016 and May 2018. Further details are available from the main project website: <http://www.sufisa.eu/>. The document provides some key messages that summarize the main issues arisen from the study and potential policy implications.

### Key messages

- The Pear sector is facing some challenges related to the reduction of internal consumption. It is important to involve people, rationally informing about the unique characteristics of pear fruit, through advertising and labelling system increase consumer preference
- One of the main issues affecting the pear market highlighted by experts is the extreme fragmentation of the sector that determines a lack of bargaining power of producers along the supply particularly with retailer. The reason is mainly due to the high number of consortium existent on the territory



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- Due to the restriction in the use of some chemicals new incoming diseases such as Psilla, Halyomorpha haly, Xilella etc., which undermines productions, are difficult to keep under control. Moreover, some agrochemical companies do not invest in the discovery of new chemicals
- Several consequences of climate changes have been highlighted: the increasing of irrigation costs, the simultaneous maturation of several varieties which is creating a partial overcapacity on the markets, problems in the regular development of fruits (especially Abate Fétel and White William determined by high temperature changes that characterized the post-affiliation phase of fruits)
- It becomes increasingly strategic to find and consolidate new markets. Italy can export without particular difficulties in markets such as Hong Kong, Canada, United Arab Emirates. Due to Russian embargo and Chinese phytosanitary barriers, producers have to divert their production to the Far East. Collaboration to promote the export to new market should be set up by political institutions
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- Innovation variety is an important strategy to prompt consumption. However, because pear implants have a long time rotation, with a remarkable initial investment and some unproductive years at the beginning of the implant life, the introduction of new variety must be carefully evaluated and financed
- Producers are oriented in improving the quality of the product. However, together with retailers they face several issues in preserving the proper quality of the pear fruit, which is compromised during several stages of the supply chain: harvesting, storage and transportation. In addition, comparing with apples or other types of fruit, quality characteristics (taste, fragrance, texture etc.) are more related to the ripening stage and so on the harvesting time.



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