

COUNTRY STATEMENT: GREECE

- Cotton used to be and still is considered as a national product of Greece. In this aspect great attention has been given, starting from the first step of production till the final product. This major agricultural crop with long tradition in Greece, accounts for almost 10% of total agricultural land and more than 45,000 cotton farmers in the country. Cotton is grown mostly between 35⁰N and 38⁰N latitude. The main cotton production regions in Greece are located in Central and Northern Greece and more specifically in Thessaly, Central Macedonia, Thraki and Sterea Ellada.

The plains where cotton is cultivated have mostly alluvian soil, which is suitable for cotton. Several non biotech varieties of *Gossypium hirsutum* are successfully grown in Greece.

Almost all cotton areas are irrigated and only a very small percentage of less than 5% is grown under dry land conditions. All stages of cultivation process are fully mechanized.

Campaign 2019/2020

- Cultivated area reached nearly 291,470 ha during campaign 2019/2020, which was 7% increased compared to last year and the production of seed cotton was about 1,044,180 metric tn from which some 360,670 metric tn of lint cotton were produced. There were not any serious problems concerning cotton bollworm (*Helicoverpa armigera*) or weather conditions that occurred in the previous campaign. This fact reflects to the total cotton production of 2019/2020 which was 20% higher than the previous campaign. In 2019/2020 campaign the production of lint cotton was higher to 2018/2019 because the total cultivated area was increased and the yields per hectare were significantly higher than the previous year.
- The quality of cotton during campaign 2019/2020 was good enough.
- As regards farmers' income the average price of seed cotton was 0.44€ per kilo.

Campaign 2020/2021

- As regards campaign 2020/2021 the cultivated area is nearly 276,678 hectares (area controls are not completed yet) which is about 5% lower to last season. Following a conservative view and based on average yields it is estimated that new crop's production (seedcotton) will be about 840,000 metric tons. Harvesting has started and ginning mills have begun the production of lint cotton.
- During this growing season cotton sector faced many problems. The covid-19 epidemic created many problems like reduced exports (>40.000tn compared to the previous year), reduced seedcotton yields (20% lower compared to the previous year) and lower prices due to the reduced global consumption. Also, bad weather conditions during harvesting led to degradation of cotton quality in some regions like Thessaly, which represents a big part of cotton cultivated area. For these reasons the average price of seedcotton was about 0.41€ per kilo and in some cases, like Thessaly, even lower.
- As regards farmers' income that was lower (about 10%) compared to last year.