

Tomato processing in Brazil

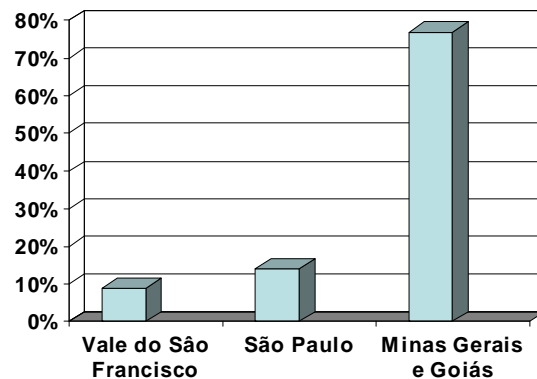
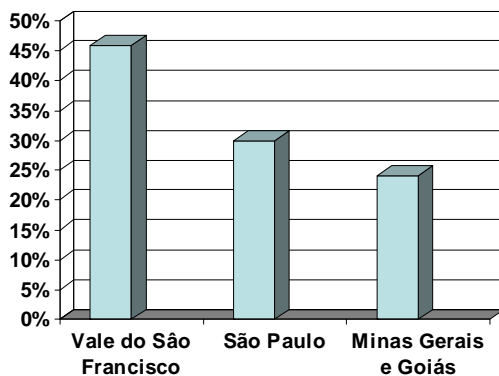
The average production of tomato for processing in Brazil over the last five years was 1.18 million tonnes of tomatoes, with a range of 1.1 to 1.3 million tonnes.

One of the main features of these past few years has been the shift of cultivation zones away from the regions of Sao Francisco (North-West) and Sao Paulo (South) towards the Central Western region (Goias and Minas Gerais mainly) which has the most favourable climate, good water availability and good infrastructure for irrigation with central pivot mainly, and also less urban pressure.



In the 1990s: total surface 27 00 hectares

In 2000: total surface 20 362 hectares

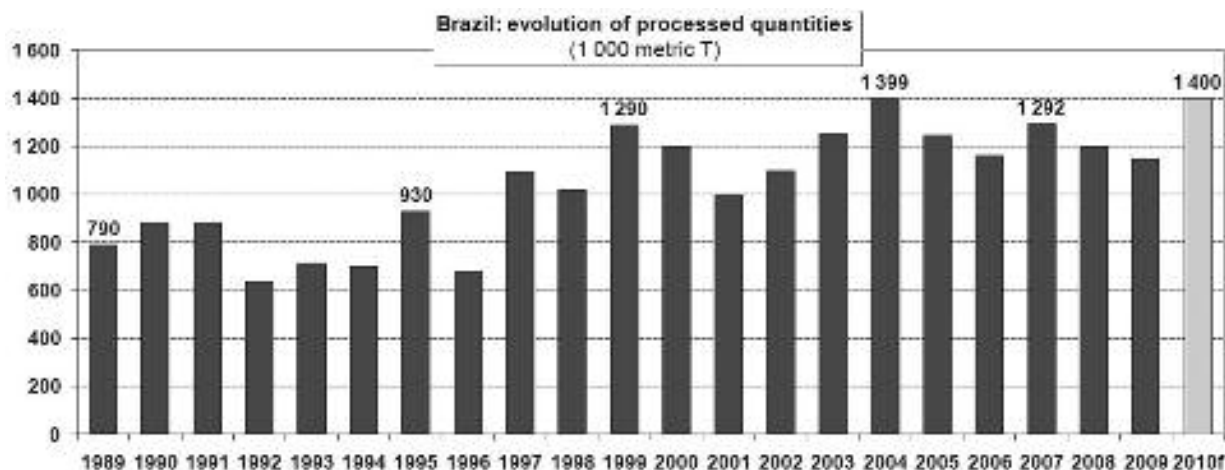


Production in Brazil takes place during the winter season, which is the dry season. Tropical conditions mean an average temperature that does not change much throughout the year, with a summer characterised by rain, with a dry winter.

In Goiania, conditions are good for tomato cultivation with reduced rain in March – April followed by a dry period usually until the end of September, enabling to harvest until October. The harvest starts in June and ends in October and is nearly totally mechanised. Average yields are between 60 and 80 t/ha depending on year. The surface planted annually ranges between 18 000 to 22 000 ha, and the price of tomatoes farm gate ranges between 57 IUSD and 88 USD depending largely on the real valuation.

The research agency Embrapa is coordinating many research projects in order to improve agricultural practices, pests and insect management, water management, increase

productivity and decrease costs in order to maintain the profitability of the industry in the region. The crop is all transplanted from hybrid seeds and the seedling industry is well organised. 50% of the seeds are Heinz varieties, with Nunhems and Seminis also important. Technology is there but growers need to be trained to use the best practices. Temperature conditions mean that disease infestation occurs all year round, with no cold spell to kill diseases: late blight an issue more than in other countries. There is a new regulation in Goiania to restrict planting time to 1st March to 1st July but as it only applies to processing tomatoes and not to fresh tomatoes and other potential hosts it is not really effective.



There are 24 processors: 14 in Goias, 6 in Sao Paulo, 2 in Pernambuco, 2 in Minas Gerais. The two largest processors Unilever and Coniexpress, both situated in Goias, process on their own nearly half of the total volume.

The domestic market absorbs approximately 1.5 million tonnes equivalent fresh tomatoes a year and is normally mainly covered through domestic production, although some years imports are needed. Consumption is currently growing at a rate estimated at 11% annually, and per capita consumption is 7.8 kg/habitant /year.

Traditionally the consumption of “extracto” was high: this product is concentrated at 18% with 1% salt and 1% sugar added. The specifications for this product were loosened a few years ago and some lower concentration products of are now sold, some of a poor quality. Another popular product is polpa: 5 - 6°brix with sugar added. The market for prepared sauces (“molho”) is booming with many products in stand-up pouches (c. 30% of the market) – different quality of sauces at different brix and with added ingredients. Ketchup is also becoming very popular.

The Brazilian growers and processors are represented within WPTC by Goias Federation of Agriculture and Livestock-farming (FAEG).