

An up-to-date Overview of Rapeseed cultivation in Spain

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The set limits to sunflower cultivation due to the CAP and the own interest in rapeseed during 1994 have produced an increase round the 24 % in the area devoted to this specie, with regard to the corresponding one of the last year, and the figures have reached up 82.060 ha.

This growth has been achieved in spite of the adverse climate conditions for rapeseed cultivation, with a very acute drought, probably in the setting on the global climatic change, which in many regions on Spain has cut down rainfalls until 50 % below the average of the historical registers; as a sample, in the weather station of the Departamento de Producción Vegetal: Botánica, the rainfall recorded between Oct. 1994 and Sept. 1995 was 311,8 mm, a 40 % less than interannual means registered up to the date.

Although there has been an increase en the rapeseed cultivation area, the amount of the crop is around the 1994 ones, because this significative decrease of the rainfall.

The biggest land areas have been placed in Andalucia (45.193 ha), where the province of Sevilla played an important role with 40.000 ha, almost the whole production area. In cold winter zones, the Meseta Norte and raised regions the area represents a less important amount. The major rise has took place in Castilla - La Mancha that multiplies by four the crop area.

In the Table 1 it is pointed out the evolution of the rapeseed cultivation in the Spanish Autonomous Communities where it exists.

The most employed varieties are the short-cycle, alternative type ones, that is without the physiological necessity of cooling to bloom. Even there have been registered some very early varieties e.g. Kabel cultivar has been specifically obtained to be sown in the Southern regions, which can complete its cycle during May, avoiding better the waterless conditions.

Non-food rapeseed hasn't shown any increment and it has held an area of 2.000 ha. Lack of interest in farmers about non-food production, could be explained by a negative economic balance, due to the short profits, as it has been analysed in a study of CASADO & SOBRINO (1995). It would be advisable to make feasible this use an additional aid, considering the fact that the cultivation is carried out in zones with low precipitations and therefore in an enviroment with relatively non suitable conditions.

Table 1.- Rapeseed cultivation area in Spain (1.993 - 1.995)

Autonomous Communities	Crop Area (ha)		
	1993	1994*	1995*
Andalucía	1.737	41.005	45.193
Aragón	1.714	3.358	3.953
Castilla - La Mancha	1.296	2.210	9.404
Castilla - León	2.657	3.525	4.039
Cataluña	1.722	1.842	1.876
Extremadura	3.290	14.200	16.500
Navarra	485	793	1.067

(*) Estimations

Source: Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación. Madrid. Advances of crop area and crop production, July 1.995.

Up until the date GMO rapeseed hasn't been used in Spain. However there is an outstanding activity registering new varieties in the Official List of Commercial Varieties, with 10 new entries since 1993 (all of them double-zero cultivars). To make possible registering associations, the Rapeseed Inscription Rules have been changed, taking into account this new type of material.

Bibliography:

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