



Spain - Andrés Gómez Bueno, Director General, Grupo Gof



Not exactly what you'd call a great year

I don't even know where to begin, but however I start, it probably won't sound nice...

We face this year in Spain what is probably the smallest grain and oilseeds crop in the last five years. Everything has converged for this reduction: high input costs and irrigation water limitations have pushed many farmers to choose the planting of other products such as tree crops. So, a smaller area and a very hot and dry year have led to very low forecasts. Most people are estimating under 18Mt in total; sometimes we reach 24Mt.

But...demand is expected to shrink for the first time in many years. A strong tourism inflow is somehow softening the decrease, but there's a gloomy feeling. I guess it might be the fatigue of these difficult last few years. The pandemic pushed us to scenarios we hadn't met before. But I believe the war in Ukraine is even worse, seeing how a country that has played a very relevant role as a supplier to Spain for over a decade is devastated, cannot go unnoticed. Other issues include inflation, the threat of energy shortages, the sky-high price of fertilisers, the minimum, non-existent or even negative margins for most livestock sectors in Spain all add up to the belief that the second half of this year might bring some headaches.

I hope to be, as usual, wrong with my predictions, but I feel inclined to say 2022 won't be exactly a good year. I was very worried a couple of years ago when Sars-Cov-2 became a familiar name to all of us. Even though it was certainly no fun, we managed to arrive to the beginning of this year feeling that we might after all come out not as bad as expected, but at this moment I have trouble finding reasons to be upbeat. The good thing is that most probably next year will be better.



Photos: Nacho Fraile



Romania - Cezar Gheorghe, Clubul Fermierilor Romani pentru Agricultura Performanta



After a wonderful 2021 season that was the best since 1986, 2022 started in a slow-motion mode. The fall of 2021 did not give us the most precious life element - water. A lack of precipitation prolonged the wheat sowing period, right through to 15 November. While farmers managed to sow their intended area, the wheat crop developed poorly, with no proper vegetation (weak, uneven rise) status to meet the winter. The rapeseed crop was also sown, but the seeds did not have enough water for a long time.

The winter was mostly mild without precipitation and Romanian soil remained too dry. March and April gave us some rains that helped crop development. Thus, we foresee a recovery of wheat and rapeseed, along with feed barley. But spring crops, despite the fact they looked very promising, were already in danger due to lack of water reserves in the soil.

For **wheat** we expect a crop of 9M tonnes from an area totalling 2.15M hectares, versus a multiannual average of 9.6M tonnes. **Rapeseed** gave us a beautiful crop volume with 1.56M tonnes from 417,000 hectares. **Feed barley** reached 1.68M tonnes from 320,000 hectares.

So, we did not lose too much versus averages, better than expected I would say.

Then, after May, the disaster occurred. Heatwaves effectively destroyed the **corn** crop that was at that time in full process of cob development. From a previously expected crop of 14.5M tonnes from 2.58M hectares we now expect 8.2M tonnes. Subsequently, the **sunflower** crop also suffered during kernel development and the size of the calathidium was only the size of a daisy. From the previously expected 3.6M tonnes (out of 1.35M hectares) we now expect a maximum crop of 2.2M tonnes.

This calendar year is the worst year of drought and high temperatures that we have seen since meteorological measurements started in Romania. And we foresee a hard season to come. The water will not come soon in Romania via rains and the sowing window for rapeseed will start in the last week of August. Wheat sowing needs to start somewhere after 10-15 September and we foresee the same scenario as last season. The 2022 harvest in Romania will end sooner than usual, as the poor crop of corn and sunflower seeds will be harvested quickly. The

sunflower harvest started in early August, when we also saw the first cuts of corn.

We don't have worries about our food and feed safety; we will have enough to supply ourselves, but exports will be at lower levels than last year, especially for corn, sunflower seeds and to a lesser extent wheat.

Crop size comparison Romania (M tonnes)

