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Rice production in Bulgaria

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Rice was first introduced in Bulgaria in the fourth century, but available data on rice cultivation date only from the fourteenth century.

The Plovdiv and Pazardjik regions are the main growing areas given the proximity of the Maritsa, Goiolnitsa and Chaia rivers.

Varieties: The Italian cultivars like Ranali, Monticheli, Pegonil-15 and others were among the first to be used on account of their suitable vegetation period. These cultivars have replaced the old local varieties: white and red Pazardjik, Membe and others. In the course of 50 years, about 95% of the rice cultivated in Bulgaria is the cultivar cvs. Krasnodar-424 from USSR. It unpretendingly fails to endure scientific farming and secure yield from 3–4 t/ha. The Bulgarian rice breeders created cvs. Plovdiv-22, Roza, Belozen and dihaoloid cv. Mariana which is obtained by the plant bio-technology method. Areas occupied with rice vary from year to year with a peak from 1960 to 1980 of about 17,000 ha–8,000 ha. Rice production which then becomes unprofitable or provides low profit undergoes a sharp reduction and low quality and cheap price has to be imported from USA, China, Thailand, Kazakstan and from other countries to satisfy requirements (about 4 kg per capita/year). According to an inconclusive date, price of component could be : unhusked (hull rice): 6–7 Lv./kg.

The production cost of rice at a yield of 3–4 t/ha is 5.00 to 6.00 Lv./kg. The expenses for water, chemicals, cultivation..., drastically increased, and were multiplied by 100–200 times in some cases. The net cost of 1 kg of rice is 14–15 Lv., whereas imported rice is at 8–9 Lv.

