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Trends of Production, Cultivars and Planting Systems on Apples and Pears in Western Europe

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Normal production of 7 million tons from the EEC member countries results in about a 10% over production in a normal crop year in relation to the balance of production to consumption. The top country concerning apple as well as pear production is Italy, whereas in France the new planting rates indicate a reduction. Regarding the area covered by fruit trees within the EEC, since 1977 the apple area decreased from 212,000 ha to less than 200,000 ha and pears also are decreasing. However the small yearly reductions are generally overcompensated by the increase in productivity in modern orchards.

The most important apple cultivars, by country, are as follows: Italy—Golden Delicious 40%, Delicious 20%, and

Imperative 15%; France—Golden Delicious 65%, Delicious 10%, and Granny Smith 8%; F. R. Germany—Golden Delicious, Bos Koop and Cox's Orange; Netherlands—Golden Delicious 30%, Bos Koop and Cox's Orange; Belgium—similar to Netherlands with Jonagold 10%; United Kingdom—Cox's Orange and Bramley's Seedling.

Italy produces more pears than the total of all the other countries with Conference as the main cultivar.

High density planting systems on dwarf to medium rootstocks are more and more preferred in all areas, but individual preference by area do still exist and will continue, influenced by local tradition and ecological reasons—mainly differences in radiation.

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