



Newsletter

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND AGRICULTURE OF GEORGIA

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The coordination headquarters for Grape Harvest 2024 opens in Telavi



An estimated 300,000 tonnes of grapes are expected to be harvested this year.

“We have prioritized the winemaking and viticulture fields over the years, making significant investments in this direction. We have concrete results reflecting the annual growth of vineyard areas and wine exports. In 2024, we observed a 20% growth based on data for the last seven months.

Moreover, we had record-breaking exports the previous year and expect growers to earn a record USD 350 million this year. The government’s decision to support the Rkatsiteli variety is one of the prerequisites for this process. All is set up to ensure that the harvest is as well-organized as possible”, said the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Otar Shamugia.

The Minister commended the winegrowers and winemakers for launching the harvest, stressing the need for fully handling/settling the grapes.

During the meeting with the representatives of wine-producing companies, Mr. Shamugia focused on the quality of Georgian wine, noting that it is essential that factories receive ripe and high-quality grapes, as grape’s quality determines wine quality and competitiveness, which in turn affects the price and export figures.

The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Deputy Minister Mr. Yuri Nozadze, Kakheti Region State Representative, Mr. Giorgi Aladashvili, Regional Majority Deputies Gela Samkharauli and Irakli Kadagishvili, Chairman of the National Wine Agency Levan Mekhuzla, and local government representatives attended the event.

The Government of Georgia offers grape harvest subsidies this year, as well, enabling over 20,000 winegrowers to sell their harvest and 500 companies to easily buy and process their grapes. The purpose of these subsidies is to encourage the sale of grapes produced by winegrowers and support the steady growth of the winemaking industry.

During the 2024 harvest, all companies that purchase and process at least 100 tonnes of Rkatsiteli grapes grown in the Kakheti region will receive a state subsidy and pay the buyer at least GEL 1.00 per kg of grapes. Companies in the Kakheti region receive a subsidy of GEL 0.20 per kilogram of Rkatsiteli grapes.

The grape coordination headquarters and the hotline of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (1501) operate 24 hours a day in Telavi. The Chairman of the National Wine Agency, Mr. Levan Mekhuzla, heads the coordination center.

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The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Otar Shamugia, learns whether companies in the Kakheti region are prepared to receive grapes and visits farmer’s vineyards



Georgia’s viticulture and winemaking industry is experiencing significant growth, driven by increased state support and rising global demand. The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Otar Shamugia, highlighted these developments during his visits to vineyards and wineries across the Kakheti region, where preparations are underway for a record grape harvest in 2024.

During a visit to Ekaterine Mirinashvili’s vineyard in Shilda, Kvareli municipality, Minister Shamugia emphasized the positive impact of state support on the development of viticulture and winemaking in Georgia. “State support and active cooperation with the private sector, winemakers, and



companies gave us the result we have today, reflecting in the growth of both production and wine export,” he stated.

Mirinashvili, who planted Saperavi grapes with state funding five years ago, is expecting her second harvest and plans to produce and export wine in the future. “This year, the quality and quantity of our harvest is excellent. With state support, I planted a vineyard five years ago, which is already in full swing,” she shared.

The 2024 grape harvest in Georgia is projected to reach around 300,000 tonnes, a significant increase from previous years. Minister Shamugia highlighted the remarkable growth in the sector; noting, “Ten to twelve years ago, the income of our winegrowers in Kakheti was GEL 50 million;

this year, we expect it to be at least 350 million, which is the result of our sound policy.”

The number of registered wine-producing companies in Georgia has increased dramatically, from just 40 in 2012 to over 3,000 today, with more than 500 enterprises actively participating in the grape-receiving process this year. “It is our task to ensure that the private sector buys as many grapes as possible and then sells wine,” Shamugia said, underscoring the importance of supporting both production and sales.

Besik Jobava, director of “Winery Jobava” in Kvareli municipality, highlighted the benefits of the state’s preferential agro-credit program, which has enabled his company to expand production and prepare for exports to Europe, Israel, and the United States. “From September, the first export batch will be sent to European countries, and from 2025, Israel and the United States of America will be added to the list of exporter countries,” Jobava explained.

Georgia’s commitment to supporting the viticulture and winemaking industry is paying off, with record harvests, increased income for winegrowers, and expanded export markets. “We strive to ensure a smooth grape harvest settlement and for producers to receive increased income,” Minister Shamugia affirmed, highlighting the government’s ongoing efforts to boost the sector’s growth and sustainability.

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Otar Shamugia meets with the representatives of hazelnut storage and processing enterprises and hazelnut farmers



Georgia’s hazelnut industry is experiencing significant growth, driven by increased government support to enhance both the quality and quantity of production. Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Otar Shamugia, has been actively engaging with hazelnut farmers and industry representatives to discuss progress and future plans for the sector.

During a recent visit to the Guria region, Minister Shamugia met with farmers at a modern storage facility in Kvemo Aketi. He emphasized the importance of quality control, stating, “The quality and quantity of hazelnuts have improved significantly this year. Farmers’ income greatly depends on good quality hazelnuts, which must be handled, stored, and dried under appropriate conditions. The demand for high-quality hazelnuts is high, which drives up the price correspondingly.”

The government has implemented several programs to support the hazelnut industry, including the State Hazelnut Production Assistance Program, which is in its second year. The program has reached up to 96,000 beneficiaries and supported over 45,000 hectares of hazelnut orchards. This year alone, farmers have received GEL 21 million in assistance. Furthermore, the government has co-financed the creation of 23 hazelnut storage and processing enterprises, investing GEL 10.2 million to enhance the indus-

try’s capacity to meet international standards and expand export markets. Minister Shamugia underscored the state’s role in supporting the industry: “With state support, new hazelnut orchards are being planted, storage and processing infrastructure is being created, and support is available for farmers in adopting international standards. This is a prerequisite for increasing exports and expanding export markets.”

In the Senaki municipality, Minister Shamugia expressed optimism about the year’s harvest, predicting it would exceed last year’s yield. “We expect more harvest than last year,” he said. “Medium- and high-quality hazelnuts are around 30–40% more expensive this year than in the same period of the previous year, which indicates that farmers’ income from the sale of hazelnuts will increase significantly and exceed GEL 250 million.” The “Plant the Future” program and preferential financial resources have further supported the expansion of hazelnut orchards and production.

With ongoing state initiatives and significant financial support, Georgia’s hazelnut industry is poised for continued growth. Efforts to improve quality, expand production, and enhance export capabilities will ensure long-term success and profitability for hazelnut farmers across the country.

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Otar Shamugia: “The research undertaken by the Swiss company with modern methodologies and approaches is crucial to get comprehensive information about the current processes on the glaciers.”



Daniel Tobler, an expert from one of the leading international consulting Swiss companies – “GEOTEST AG”, completed his working visit to Georgia and met with the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture to summarize the results and findings of his research.

The Minister thanked the representative of the international consulting Swiss company for the ongoing studies on 22 glacial valleys across the country and the research conducted during the Shovi disaster.

Mr. Shamugia emphasized that active cooperation with the Swiss side will continue.

“Climate change-related negative processes, including threats from melting glaciers, are challenges for Georgia and the rest of the globe; hence, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture continues to collaborate with one of the leading Swiss experts worldwide- investigating the glaciers in Georgia; the research is carried out with modern methods and approaches to get comprehensive information about the current processes on the glaciers. I would emphasize that any measure, be it monitoring, early warning system, alarm system, or other, should be based on detailed scientific studies; moreover, specific measures will be implemented at certain locations based on the conclusions of the studies. It is crucial that highly qualified experts are involved in this process, and we jointly carry out the mentioned activities “, said Minister Shamugia.

During his visit, Daniel Tobler, along with Agency specialists and an independent expert, inspected the glacial valleys on the southern slopes of the Caucasus range from a helicopter.

The potential threats will be analyzed in detail and compared with the existing satellite material based on the aerial photographs taken by the expert, and future activities will be planned for adopting monitoring systems in the hotspots identified by the research.

During the meeting, Giorgi Gotsiridze, Director of the “GeoGraphic” company, emphasized the duration of the current process, noting that the Southern Slope of the Caucasus was fully evaluated within the current research.

“We went to Shovi, Devdoraki, and Leghziri, where we investigated and discovered various factors following the natural disaster; although we did not know the overall picture for the Caucasus till now, the mentioned proj-

ect revealed the whole picture, while the hazard map indicated how much work is still to be done in the future.

Against the backdrop of this general picture, against the backdrop of the detection of active points, it is already possible to plan better monitoring, notification, early warning, and various systems and, most importantly, to plan resources as no country has ever had the financial resources for specific threats and risk management “, said Giorgi Gotsadze.

Daniel Tobler, an expert of Swiss consulting company “GEOTEST AG”, focused on further activities.

We possess information about current processes and locations; we know who and where to start; once begun, we will identify the hot spots and the most critical locations; therefore, the initial step involves a detailed inspection of the critical areas, identifying potential scenarios, actively engaging in on-site processes, and then defining simulations to study and prepare for these scenarios.

Subsequently, a monitoring system should be established, integrating hazard management practices with a clearly defined hazard management plan, which will take one or two years; however, we have places in Switzerland that took three years for an in-depth evaluation of these locations,” said Daniel Tobler.

While speaking about the duration of the mentioned process, he also noted that there are still such risk zones where the population lives in Switzerland, and it is extremely tough to act promptly in a short time since warning systems are less effective in these cases.

It is worth mentioning that this year, the National Environmental Agency signed an agreement with the company “GEOTEST AG” to conduct research in 22 glacial valleys across the country. Within the next two months, the Swiss consulting company will identify “specific” potential glacial dangers and their hotspots, followed by relevant recommendations to address these concerns and submit the final document to the Agency.

The First Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mrs. Nino Tandilashvili, the Head of the National Environmental Agency, Mr. Vasil Gedevanishvili, and representatives of the National Environmental Agency attended the meeting held in the Ministry.



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Otar Shamugia meets the President of the Georgia Red Cross Society, Natia Loladze



The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture hosted the President of the Georgia Red Cross Society, Mrs. Natia Loladze.

During the meeting, the parties emphasized that the Georgia Red Cross Society, in collaboration with the Green Climate Fund and the involvement of local communities, is planning to launch a new initiative to reduce the risks of climate change-related disasters.

According to Minister Shamugia, predicting natural processes in the background of climate change and taking measures to reduce disaster risks are particularly important.

“The state has made important efforts toward predicting natural processes. We plan to adopt information and communications systems (ICT), allowing us to use contemporary technology to provide early warnings about upcoming natural disasters and weather forecasts. The Ministry is actively working to assess geological hazards and prevent natural events throughout the country. It is also important to undertake joint projects as there are still numerous challenges in this respect”, said Mr Otar Shamugia.

The Georgia Red Cross Society is a humanitarian public organization committed to supporting vulnerable people in overcoming the effects of socio-economic crises and dealing with emergencies.

The Red Cross Society of Georgia unites 40 branches and 15,000 volunteers in different regions of Georgia.

Secretary General of the Georgia Red Cross Society, Mrs. Nino Osepaishvili, attended the meeting.

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Otar Shamugia briefed the beekeepers in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region on the State Program for Support of the Beekeeping field



The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Otar Shamugia, along with Samtskhe-Javakheti State Representative, Mr. Besik Amiranashvili, met local beekeepers in Tskruti village, Akhaltsikhe municipality and informed them about the new state program.

Within the state support program for the beekeeping field, the beekeepers will be financed by 50% of the cost of the hives, up to GEL 70 per hive, but not more than GEL 5,000 per beneficiary.

“The new program allows our farmers to expand beekeeping field and increase honey production, enabling them to renew their hives and purchase new ones. In recent years, we have held several events to support farmers, and we have financed more than 200 cooperatives, allowing them to buy various equipment and renew their hives.

We enhanced laboratory capacities, which allowed us to export honey to countries in different regions and the European Union market without disruption.

We will continue this assistance to use and absorb our potential in the mentioned area and support farmers in producing quality and more products, “ said Mr. Otar Shamugia.

According to Besik Amiranashvili, the beekeeping field is a sufficiently developed industry in the region. The state has been supporting beekeepers through various programs and projects over the years. The new program is essential for residents as well.

Beekeepers positively evaluated the new program. During the meeting, the parties emphasized that the targeted program would considerably benefit them and allow them to boost honey production further.

The potential beneficiary must have at least ten bee families (at least ten hives), and the number of hives should not exceed 150% of the number of bee families registered in the beneficiary’s apiary at the time of application to participate in the program.

The potential beneficiary must register as a business operator, and the apiary should be registered in the National Animal Identification and Traceability System (NAITS) before participating in the program.

It is worth mentioning that the state promotes the development of beekeeping through different programs and projects, aiming to promote the sustainability of quality honey production, increase access to industry knowledge, and raise awareness of Georgian honey in the international market, allowing more quality Georgian products to enter both local and export markets.

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Otar Shamugia meets the Georgian Blueberry Growers' Association (GBGA) members and European exporters.

The Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Mr. Otar Shamugia, met with the Georgian Blueberry Growers' Association (GBGA) members and European exporters.

During the meeting, the parties discussed various issues, including post-harvest handling/storage of blueberries, how the season progresses, the importance of exports, and the possibilities of increasing blueberry crop production.

The Minister focused on the state support programs, particularly the program "Plant the Future".

"This year, Georgia exported a record volume of blueberries amounting to USD 26 million. We have assisted farmers in planting around 2700 hectares of blueberry orchards through our program "Plant the Future", and we expect to increase harvests from these orchards annually. Moreover, we expect to harvest about 20–25,000 tonnes in the upcoming years. Meanwhile, promoting product diversification and increasing sales in different markets is

crucial. This year, Georgia exported 500 tonnes of blueberries to the EU market, and we strive to improve these results. Therefore, we will support the industry to the greatest extent possible in the future as well", said Mr. Otar Shamugia.

"I can assure you that the season for handling and storing blueberries has been successful. Logistics services were well organized and run without any challenges. We would convey the favorable responses Georgian blueberries received since entering the EU market.

It is worth mentioning that Georgian farmers put an enormous amount of effort and dedication, and we think that Georgian blueberry has a great production potential", said Mr. Ahmet Aktas, the exporter and founder of the Company "Wonderland Farmers".

The conversation touched upon the importance of state support for blueberry processing, juice production, and packaging.

The Deputy Minister, Mr. Tengiz Nasaridze, and representatives of the relevant services of the Ministry attended the meeting.

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