



International conference on the red Palm Weevil in Tunisia

The Economic Importance of Dates Production in Tunisia

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INTRODUCTION

- ▶ **The oasis constitutes a specific natural landscape in which an agricultural system of production has been created by the know how of farmers Generations who have practiced land management, variety selection, irrigation system and have used tools adapted to the oasis context.**
 - ▶ **The date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera* L.) is the dominant component on which the sustainable biophysical and socio-economic structures of the oasis ecosystem are based;**
 - ▶ **The date palm is the only indigenous wild desert plant definitely domesticated in its native harsh environment.**
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The Economic Importance of dates

**Represents
12% of the
total value
of
agricultural
exports**

**Contributes by
6% the total
value of
agricultural
production**

**Occupies the
second place in
the ladder of
agricultural
products
exports.
In 2016 the
value of
exportations
(about 500MD)**

Main policies for the development of date sector in Tunisia

The Ministry of agriculture has established policies for the development of the date palm sector

1998: Implementation of a ten-year national plan (1998-2008) for the development of the Date sector to achieve :

- Production of 150 000 tons
- Export of 50 000 tons
- By 2025 : production of 350000 Tons and export of 150000 Tons

- **Water Investment Program PISEAU I and 2**
- **Project for the improvement of irrigated areas APIOS**
- **National Program for Irrigation Water Economy**

Legal and Institutional framework

Regional Center for Research in Oasian Agriculture (CRRAO)	2006
Center for vocational training in palm dates(Kébili, Tozeur, Gafsa and Gabès)	
Technical Center for Dates (CTD)	2009
Establishement of a fund to improve the quality of dates	2008

Legal framework

Decree n° 2009-723 dated 16 March 2009, fixing the methods of intervention and functioning of the fund of the dates quality promotion.

Decree du 25/02/2009: portant approbation du statut type du centre technique des dattes

Decree du 18/01/1988: relatif a l'organisation de la campagne des dattes

Decree du 25/10/2000: portant approbation du cahier des charges pour l'exercice du commerce de distribution des dattes



Location of the Tunisian oasis

Tunisian oases are located in the south of Tunisia which is characterized by a Saharian climate receiving a quantity of rainfall less than 150 mm/year.

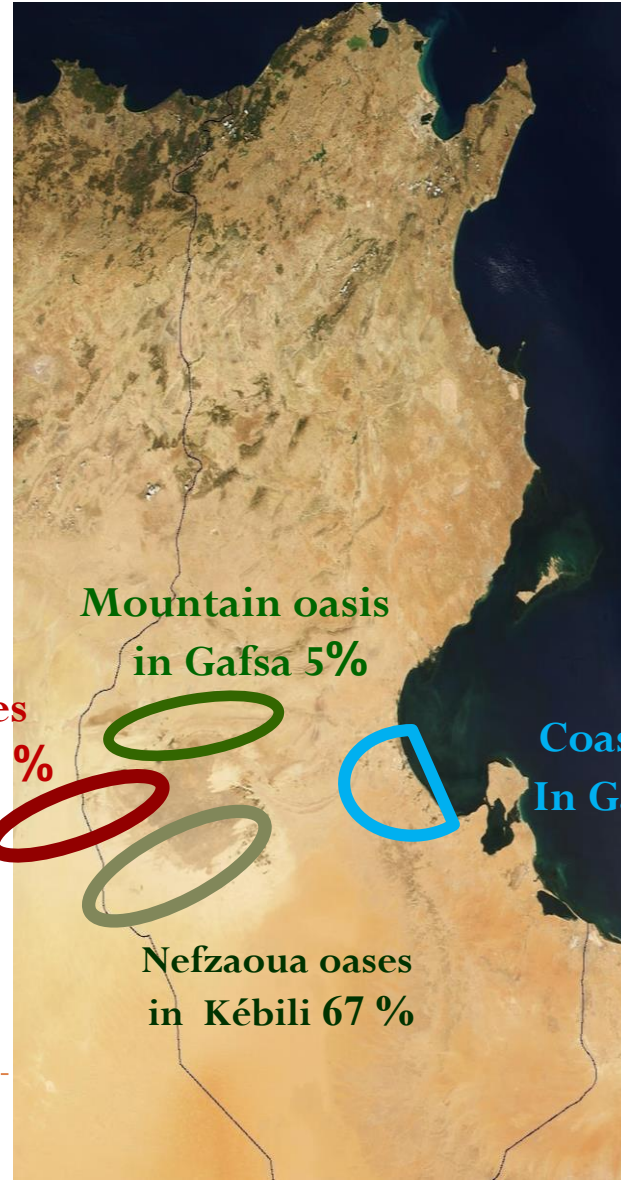
Based on their site characteristics topography, oases are sorted into 3 categories:

Djerid oases
in Tozeur 16 %

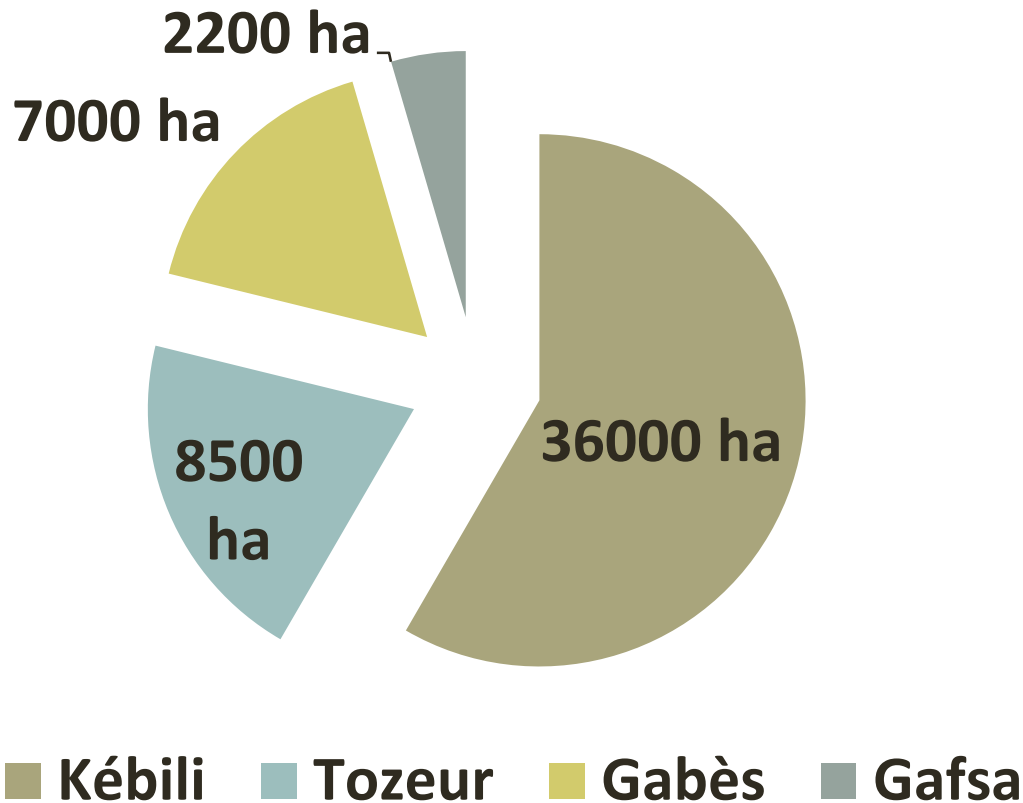
Mountain oasis
in Gafsa 5%

Coastal oasis
In Gabès 13%

Nefzaoua oases
in Kébili 67 %



Area of Date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera* L.)



Oasis area is estimated at about 54 000 ha divided into mainly four governorates : Kébili (67%), Tozeur (16%), Gabès (13%), and Gafsa (5%).



Oases categories



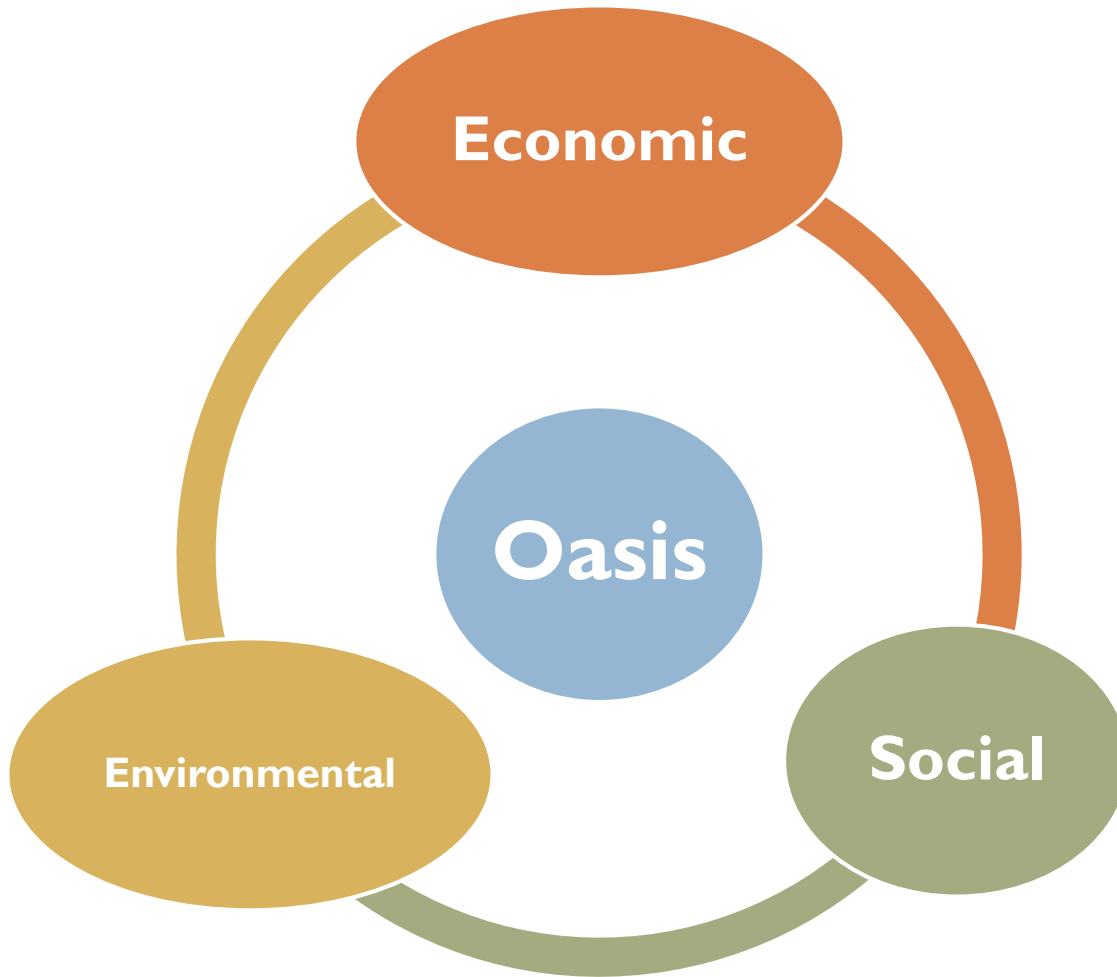
Traditional oasis

- High density of palm trees (> 300 trees per hectare)
- Large varietal diversity of dates including common dates which are in the first stage and intercropping (three-stages of crops)



Modern oasis

- Characterized by the monoculture of the variety Deglet Noor
 - Density of 100-156 trees per hectare
-



The oasis system has played a key role in the stability and continuity of life in the desert areas



Environmental



Contributes to the resistance to desertification and sand stabilization



Biodiversity with smart cropping system divided into three stages of cultures:

- **Palm trees in the upper floor**
- **Fruit trees: pomegranate, olives, Apricot, grapes, apples, Citrus.....in 2nd floor;**
- **Third floor: various vegetable crops, cereals, fourrages (henna and tobacco)**



Social



Creates jobs in the oases (2 millions working days per year) and provides a livelihood for nearly 60000 households.





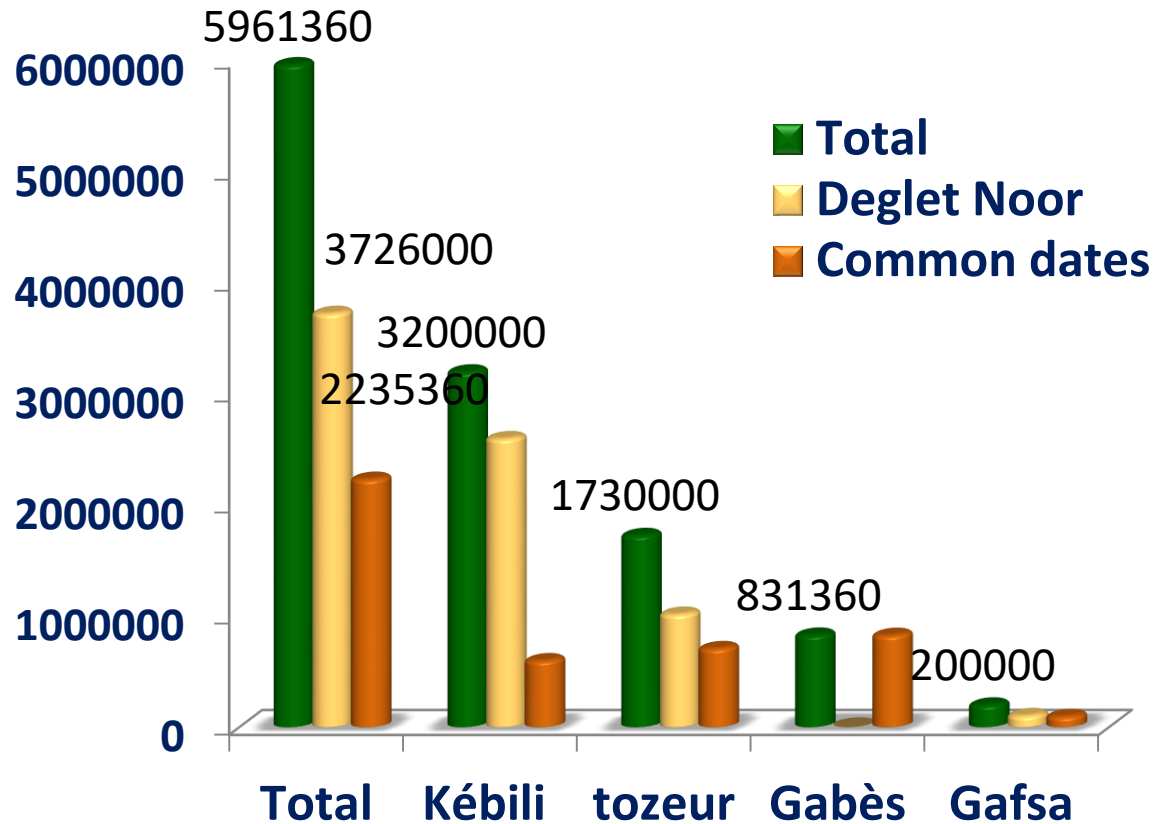
Deglet Noor: a strategic choice for the development of dates sector

- ▶ **The main variety produced in our palm groves is the Deglet Noor variety, this strategic choice was imposed by market imperatives, in particular the existence of a growing international demand, and a promising Economic development opportunity;**

 - ▶ **Deglet Noor is highly prized for its organoleptic and nutritional qualities compared to other exported varieties. However Deglet Noor is very sensitive to many diseases and pest.**
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Distribution of palm trees



The total number of palm trees is about 6 million:

***Deglet Nour: 62%**

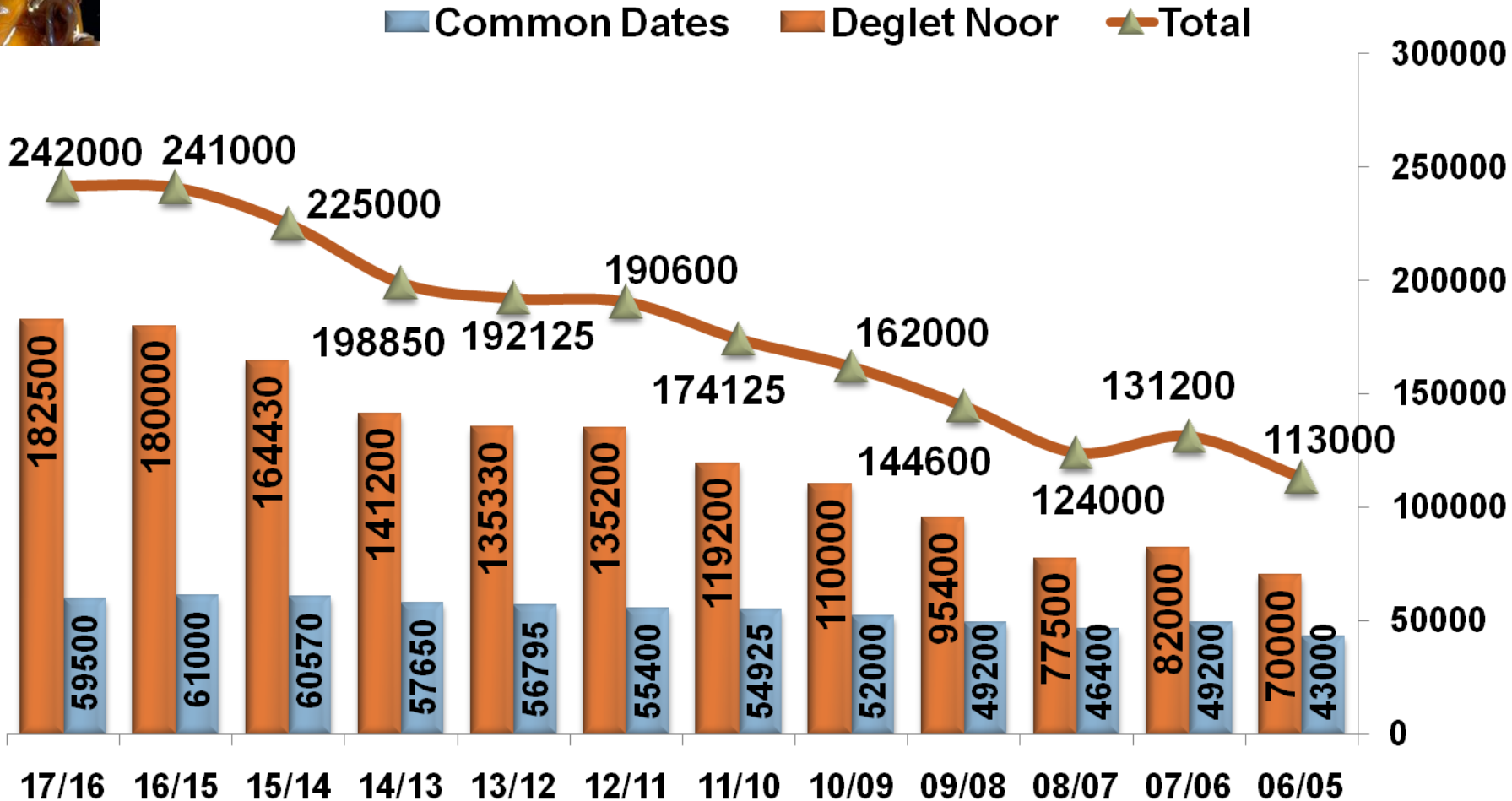
* **Allig: 10 %**

* **Common dates :28%**





Dates production In Tunisia (2006- 2017)



Tunisian dates production is about 4% of the world dates production

- ▶ Increase of Date Production of about 7%, annually
- Increase of Deglet Noor by 10% and 5% for the common dates

Dates Value Chain

The date value chain is organized around three main functions:

Production, collection-storage and packaging-export

**50.000
farmers**

- 75 % are small farmers
- Average of plots is 0.85 ha /producer

**400
collectors**

- Almost 70% of the date production transits through collectors
- Storage capacity ranging from 50 to 300 tons

**72
Packaging
exporters:**

- stations of packaging and exporting dates
- 52 % of them are located in the area of production

Storage capacity and localisation

34 Conditioning stations (Nabel 15, Ben Arous 9 Manouba 4,)

38 Conditioning stations (Kébili 9, Tozeur 21, Gabès 2...)

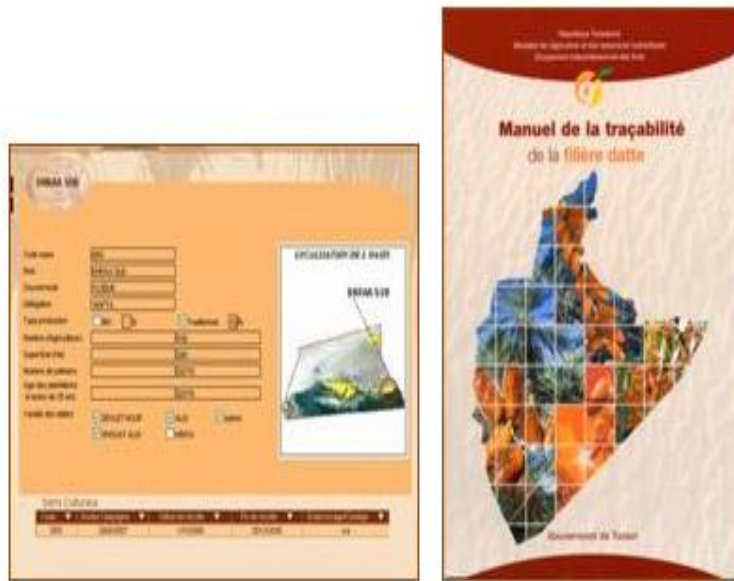


The number of conditioning stations is about 72

The capacity of storage in Kébili is 40000 Tons and 55000 Tons in Tozeur



Traceability



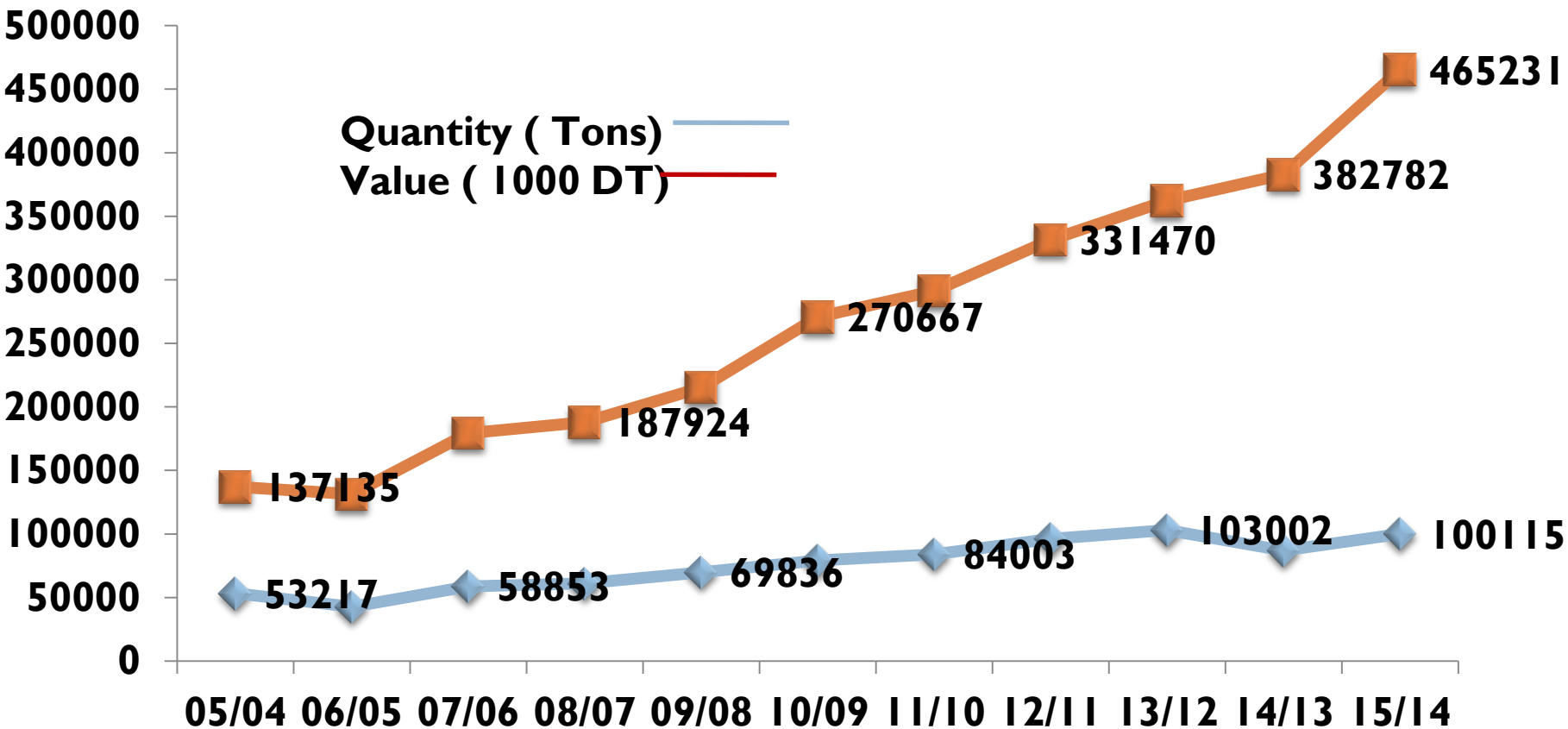
Traceability guide line

- ▶ **Until 2006** the traceability of the batches was only possible from the entry into the factory (requirement of the **ISO certification**)

- ▶ **Since 2007** the export chain value has established a traceability system in accordance with **EC Regulation 178/2002** in order to trace the products from the plot to the market



Dates Exports (2005- 2015)



Exports have increased during the last decade :

- The annual increase in exported quantities is 7%

- ▶The annual increase in exports value is 10 %

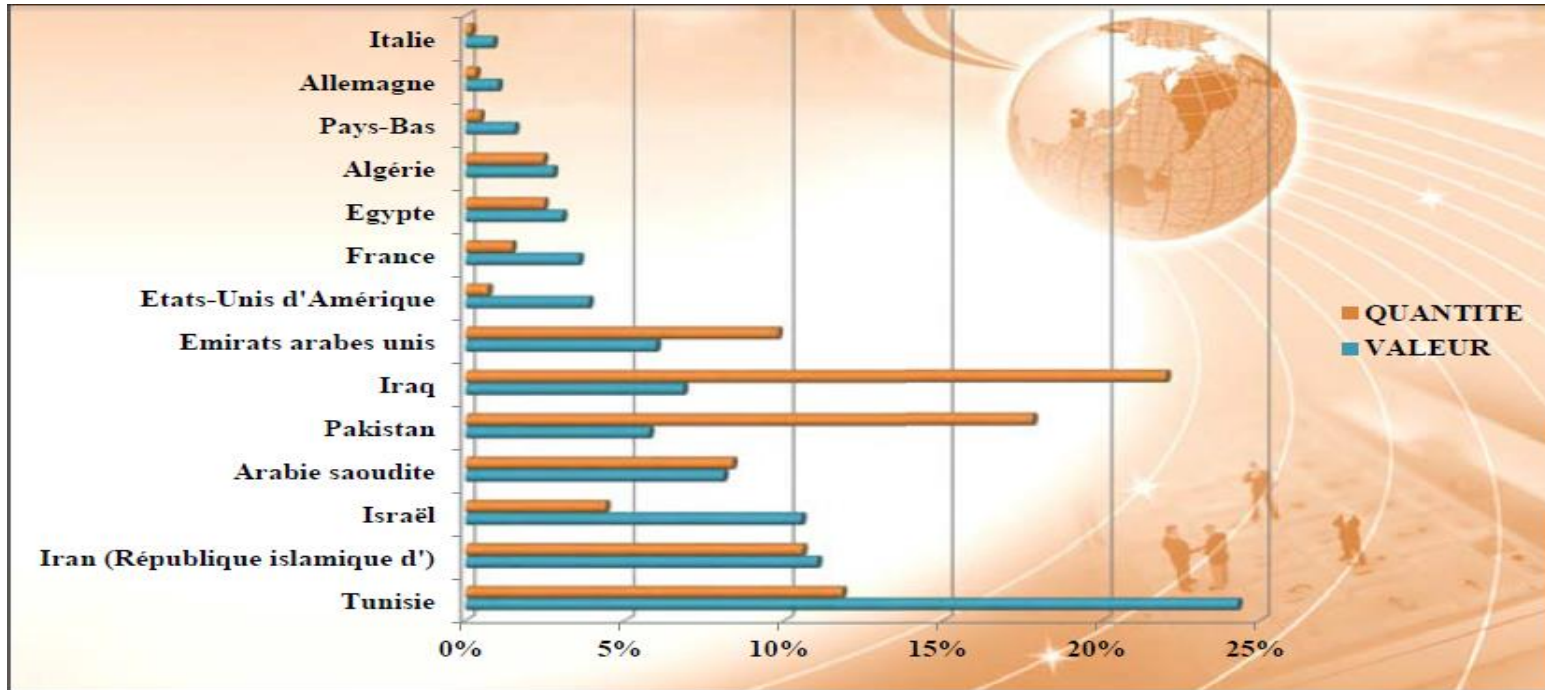
Tunisian position on the world Trade market

- ▶ **Tunisia is the first exporter in terms of value. Tunisian dates account for 24% of the value of dates world trade.**
 - ▶ **At the national level, dates occupy the second rank in agricultural products exports, after olive oil.**
 - ▶ **In terms of value, during the period 2009-2013, the value of date exports was an average of \$195,941 millions.**
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Market shares

(average of the period 2009-2013)

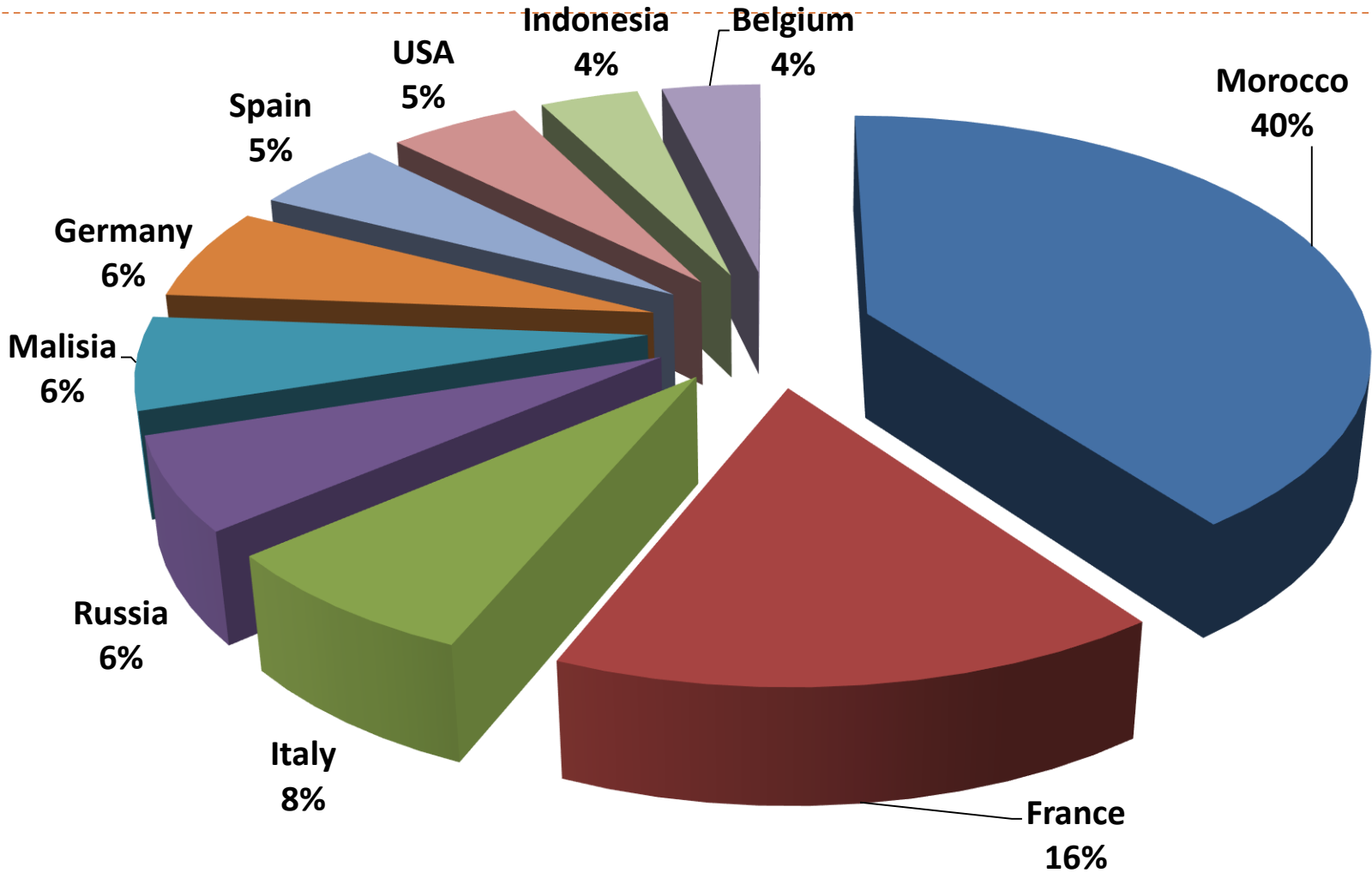


In the world ranking, Tunisia holds for the dates a share 24% of the world market, followed by Iran (11%), Israel (10.4%) Saudi Arabia (8.6%), Pakistan (6%) and Iraq

Some countries are not producers but exporters of dates



Main destinations of Tunisian dates



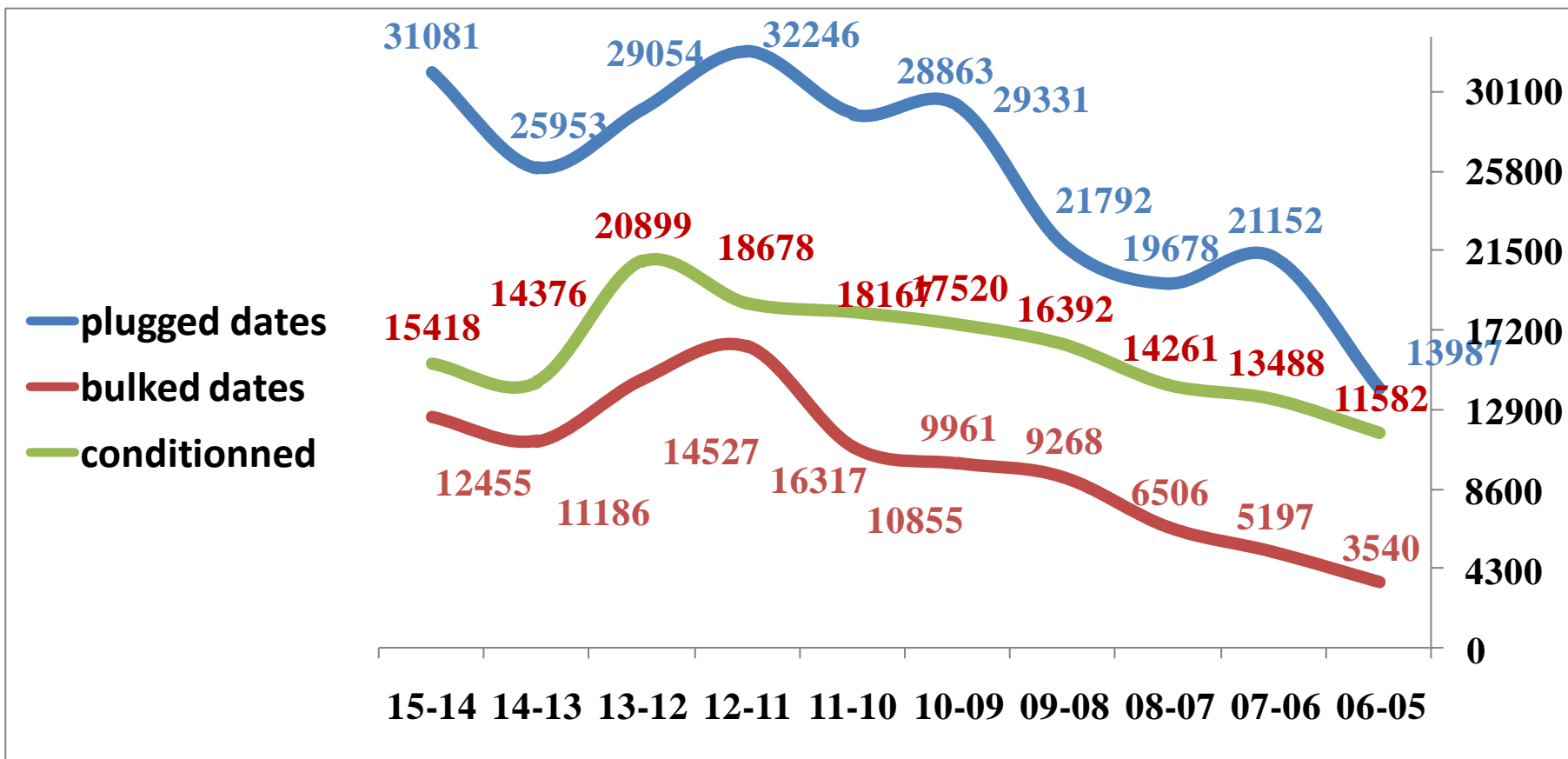
The Moroccan market is in the first rank with 40% of Tunisian exported dates,
▶ European countries are the main partners of Tunisia

Tunisian position in dates world trade market

- ▶ **Tunisian date exports represent:**
 - * **37% of the European market imports,**
 - * **about half of the Moroccan market imports.**
- ▶ **the Asian market represents about 70% of the world market for dates, of which 36% are exported to the Indian market. Followed by the European market by 15% and the US market by 3%.**
- ▶ **The quantities traded globally represent about 10% of the total quantities produced with a transaction number of 1500 billion, with Tunisia accounting for one-third**



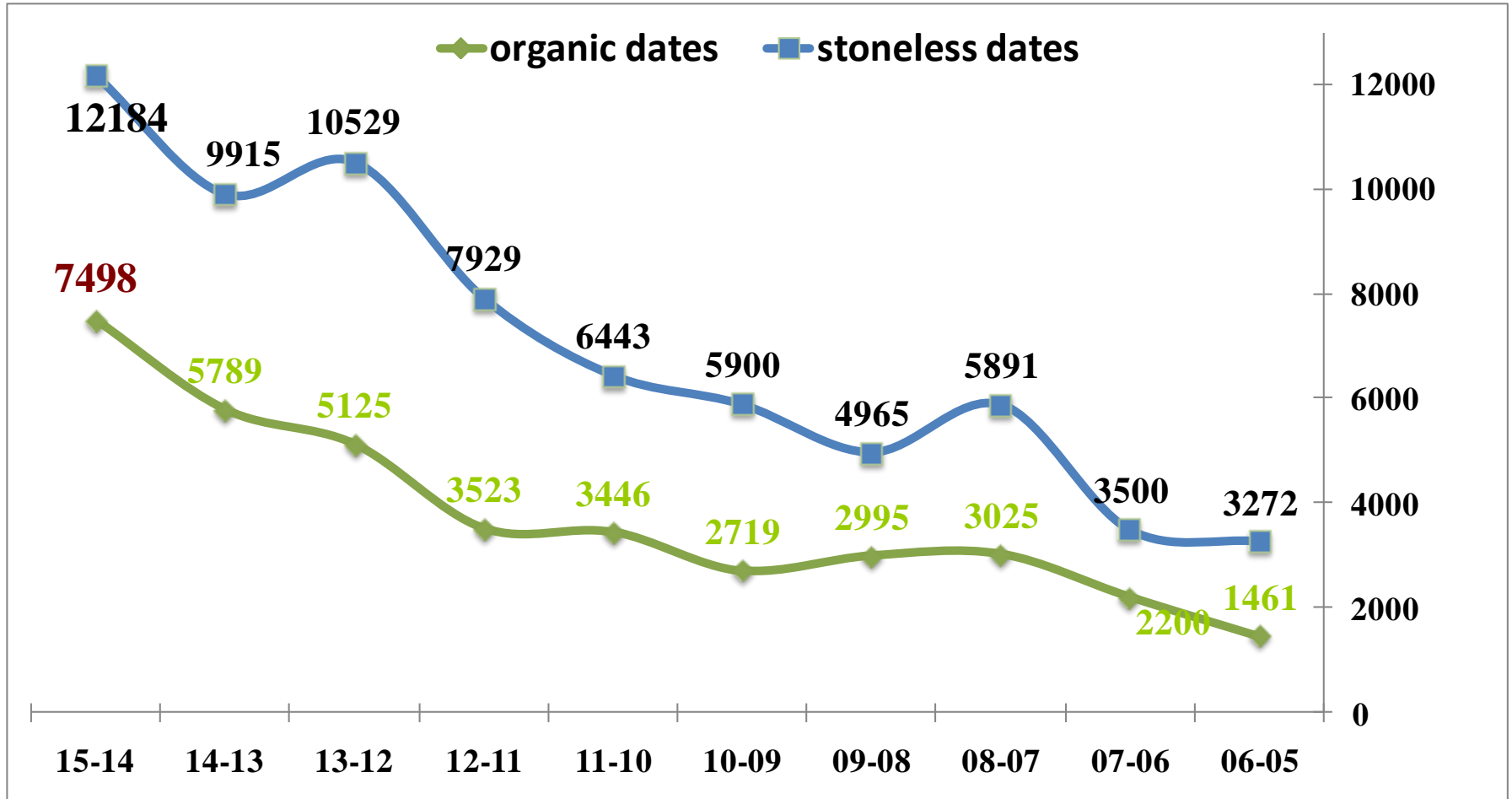
Evolution of the Deglet Noor exportation



Tunisian date are exported in different types Natural on branch, bulked or conditioned



Valorisation of Deglet Noor dates



Annual growth rate of organic dates exported: 21.5 %

Exported products



Deglet Nour on branch



Natural Deglet Nour (bulk)



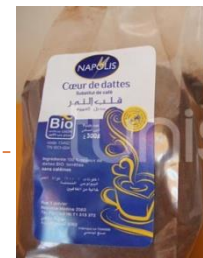
Treated dates



Stuffed Dates



Date Syrup



Coffe of date stones

Organic markets

United Kingdom, Germany and Switzerland require Organic products, where consumers have high standards of quality and strict compliance with standards.



About 2.5 % of the total dates area are certified organic with a total production of 9000 Tons

- ▶ The potential for the certified dates (PDO, PGI, etc.) is an opportunity in the European markets.



A GI has been issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Fisheries since the 12th of May 2012. and now the ministry is working on the development of a PDO dates of Nefzaoua

Synopsis of the Dates sector

- ▶ **The date sector is a strategic sector which is mainly destined to export and the local market. It could be further promoted through:**
 - ▶ **products diversification**
 - ▶ **identification new markets**
 - ▶ **strengthening its position in the traditional markets**
 - ▶ **Quality enhancement**
 - ▶ **Preservation of the oasis agro-ecosystems and enhancement of their resilience to climate change and to other social and economic pressures.**



Threats

The oasis ecosystem is facing serious threats :

- **Water scarcity**
- **Hydromorphy (soil salinity),**
- **Farmers Neglection**
- **Lack of skilled labor**



Threats (Cont'd)

Fusarium oxysporum f.sp. albedinis

مرض البيوض

- The disease was found in Morocco, where more than 65% of the palm trees were destroyed.
- Algeria, where more than 30% of the palm trees were destroyed.



The red Palm Weevil *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*

Red palm weevil was firstly discovered in Tunis on ornamental palms (*Phoenix canariensis*) since 2011 and outspread on many regions, Bizerte, Nabeul , Manouba.

- ▶ It's still in the north of Tunisia but at 500 km of date production area.

Thanks for your attention