

Spain: Lemon exports to the EU up 23%

The Fino lemon campaign could not go any better for Ailimpo's associates. The mid-season's figures in terms of prices, volumes sold and export volumes (+23% to the European Union) are all really positive.

The director of the Lemon and Grapefruit Inter-professional Association (Ailimpo), based in Murcia, explains that the reasons for these good results are the fact that the season was advanced by two weeks, that European demand is on the rise and that prices have remained above production costs.

Between September and December 2013, a total of 292,386 tonnes of Fino lemons were marketed, compared to the 238,346 tonnes of the same period last year (54,040 tonnes more).

"In general terms, we could say that this improvement is due to an increase in exports, to the larger volumes shipped to the juice industry and to the fact that the campaign started two weeks earlier," explains José Antonio García. Argentina finished early, in late July, due to frosts, and consequently Spanish lemons started being harvested in late September. We expect our entire production to be harvested this season," explains the director of Ailimpo.

The EU is still the largest export destination. During the first four months of the season, a total of 185,141 tonnes have been shipped to EU markets; 23% more than last year. 45,600 tonnes have gone to the domestic market, and 6,828 tonnes to other destinations. "Export volumes to the EU have been record-breaking, which points to an increase in consumption levels," affirms José Antonio García. "However, shipments to new markets have remained stable."

According to García, one of Spain's great competitors in the lemon market, Turkey, has had a normal production and its exports have focused on Russia, Ukraine and Saudi Arabia; three markets where Spanish lemons are hardly imported.

"We still have a leading position in the European Union, although the possibility of exporting to Russia is not ruled out once the Turkish campaign comes to an end, around late February," concludes José Antonio García.

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