

Egypt positive about current orange season in Europe

Large sized oranges (32-48) are coming primarily from Egypt this year and the medium and small sizes are coming mostly from Spain and Greece. "That is the exact opposite of the previous season," tells Walid Arafah. "The good news for Spanish orange producers is that as a result of the bad weather, volumes of large and medium sizes are limited. Demand for the smaller sizes can easily be filled by Spain. Egypt has very small volumes of those sizes."

Up until recently, only a limited number of companies imported oranges from Egypt. It was just to solve a shortage of one or two weeks, especially when the prices of the Spanish oranges were reaching a high record caused by less offered quantities. On the other hand, Egyptian Oranges reserved a good position in the Russian market, not without incidental embargoes (mostly stemming from political issues).

In Egypt, the export council is very active and strict to avoid any embargoes or problems with the MRL's of the European Union. The export Counsel of Egypt arranged a huge network of governmental and non-governmental members and communities to help the Oranges farmer in understanding the specifications of buyers. The Egyptian government is funding the "Fruit Fly Resistance Project" that aims to control the spread of this pest and administers other regulations that have been in place in order to control the quality of the exported fruit. Continuous follow up and sufficient feedback helped both sides to achieve the target.

Weather made the large sized Egyptian oranges possible. Temperatures reached up to 10 degrees during the night in the end of October-beginning of November, and there were fortunately no hail storms. This gave the Navel (winter Oranges) a great colour while still on the trees, with less risk for the Mediterranean fruit fly, which had negatively affected production and exports in previous years.

Egyptian Mineola's have arrived and are doing really well in regards to quality and shape. The Mineola's are MRL friendly and have sold for good prices so far, with prices reaching up to 9 Euro at the beginning of season. The question is, which can only be answered at the end of the season, is if they are the future of Egyptian citrus or just a fluke. Mineola's are definitely the ones to watch.

"The summer orange (Valencia) season started about 3 weeks ago, which is from our experience is very low high risk of being infected with the 'Mediterranean Fruit Fly'. The surface of the fruit is completely closed and the proactive safe resistance treatment has been applied. The colour is completely orange, it is 70% juice and, as usual, the flavour is wonderful.

"The market is looking good, and the excellent quality helps us promote the products at a competitive price," said Walid. "The expectation for Egyptian orange prices, a level of around 8 Euro should be realistic. That is a real presentation for Egyptian oranges in Europe."

Fruit active is also active in dealing with vegetables from Egypt. Working closely with Egyptian suppliers, the company markets spring onions and fresh garlic under the brand Fruitxeller.

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