

## Difficult season for Egyptian citrus

It appears that Egypt will hold on to its position as the sixth largest orange producer in the world and second largest exporter in the 2013/14 season. Orange production this year reached about 2.5 million tons, with exports totalling 1.1 million tons – about 10% more than last season. The increase in both production and export is due to the increase in acreage and the positive conditions during growth.

Domestic consumption shows a small increase. Especially in winter, oranges are popular. Local market prices though, fluctuate strongly. In developing regions, oranges can be extremely cheap, while being much more expensive in wealthier residential areas. As a result of the economic and political situation in Egypt, many fruits and vegetables have increased in price. Still, the orange remains the cheapest fruit. Bananas, apples but also grapes tend to be much more expensive.

### Export

The main cultivation areas are concentrated along the Nile in the provinces Qalyoubia, Beheira, Sharqiya, Ismailia, and Menufia. The Navel is the most cultivated variety and represents 60% of total production. Other major varieties are Baladi, Valencia, Blood, Khalily, and Sukkar. For export, Navel and Valencia are especially important. These often go to Russia, Saudi Arabia, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates and Iraq.

In terms of export, South Africa is Egypt's biggest competitor, but Turkey, Spain, Morocco, USA, China, Australia and Argentina also put up hefty competition. In response, Egypt continues to look for new markets. According to Egypt, export rates aren't the only obstacle. Other factors are at play.

Turkey for instance, has a clear geographical advantage when it comes to export to Russia. This provides lower transportation costs and shorter shipping time. South Africa makes full use of its Southern-hemisphere location by shipping out Valencia's from July to September, while the harvest in Egypt begins in December. Many markets are already saturated before Egypt is able to offload its produce.

Source: [www.freshplaza.com/](http://www.freshplaza.com/) 17/06/2014