

Spain, Courgette production down for the first time since 2006

Almería has registered a drop in the production of courgettes for the first time in recent seasons, as seen in the figures supplied by the Council of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development of the Government of Andalusia.

Since the 2006/2007 campaign, Almería's production of this vegetable had grown steadily, until this year when, due to the problems caused early in the campaign by the New Delhi **virus** (ToLCNDV), many producers had to destroy their plantations.

Compared to the previous season, the drop registered has been of -7.44%, as the total volume of courgettes produced in the province of Almería has reached over 343 million kilos, compared to the 371 million kilos of the previous campaign.

According to the analysis conducted by the Council of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development of the Government of Andalusia, courgettes reached between October and January the highest prices within this period (37% of the campaign's total).

In November and December, with only 17% of the production sold, courgette prices exceeded 1 €/kg. In the first quarter of 2014, prices dropped sharply.

Campaign Summary 2013/2014

The autumn campaign has been marked by the impact of the Tomato Leaf Curl New Delhi Virus (ToLCNDV), which forced the early withdrawal of certain plantations, resulting in a 15% reduction of the marketed production during the first four months of the campaign compared to the same period last year.

Reduced availability of courgette in Almería in this period caused prices to increase between the months of October and December compared to the average of the two preceding seasons, reaching the highest price in December (1.20 €/kg).

Unlike what these favourable courgette prices between October and January may indicate, Central Europe's demand for Almería's produce has not been great. Thus, the decline in production for commercial programmes considerably increased prices at origin.

Given this, many European clients opted to ensure product supply by closing deals with other sources, such as Morocco, which offered **more** affordable produce and were apparently not affected by the virus.

Despite the lower courgette yield in autumn, the high prices during that period encouraged many producers to plant a new cycle. This situation led to a substantial increase in supply during the months of February and March, during which Morocco also had abundant production.

The huge supply caused a significant loss of **product** value, down to 0.20 €/kg in March.

Close to two months of low prices led some producers to destroy their plantations during the month of May. In this period, the sales volume was reduced by 25-30% compared with the same period of the previous season and the price at origin increased to an average of 0.21 €/kg, dropping again in June with the campaign virtually finished.

Source : <http://www.hortidaily.com/article/11039/Spain-Courgette-production-down-for-the-first-time-since-2006>
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