

Spain: Almeria expects 3% growth in 2014/2015 citrus campaign

According to the Andalusian Council of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development, a 3% growth is expected for the 2014/2015 citrus season due to the increased production of mandarins and lemons, with a total of 243,892 tonnes.

Production estimates point to more than 1.9 million tonnes of citrus (1,957,326), which represents a 5.1 percent drop compared to last season. Nevertheless, the estimated harvest volume stands 10.7% above the average of the past four seasons.

As explained by the Secretary General for Agriculture and Food, Jerónimo Pérez Parra, "this decrease is mainly due to the lower expected production of sweet orange as a result of the negative effect on the flowering and fruiting of the high temperatures registered in April and May. However, this situation has not affected the mandarin and lemon production, which is actually expected to be larger than last season."

Pérez Parra has pointed out that these harvest prospects are in line with the estimates published by other regions, such as Valencia, which will have a 2.4 percent lower production."

As the Secretary General has stated, "for the elaboration of this information we analysed the data of 1,349 plantations with a total of 2,389.44 hectares."

In the case of mandarins, the production is expected to reach 389,068 tonnes; 6 percent more than last season, and representing 19.88 percent of Andalusia's total citrus production. As for the lemon harvest, it is expected to reach 116,450 tonnes (up 8.7 percent compared to the 2013-2014 season). It is the citrus fruit growing the most, with increases in production in all provinces, especially in Malaga, which will harvest 10.3 percent more than last year.

The Secretary General for Agriculture and Food also highlighted how exports have become one of the main strengths of the citrus sector in Spain and Andalusia, whose citrus sales (sweet orange, mandarin and lemon) overseas in 2013 accounted for more than 172 million Euro, mainly due to the 212 876 tonnes of oranges shipped, for which it obtained 120 million Euro. He also highlighted increase in lemon exports, which reached 22,189 tonnes in 2013, worth 22 million Euro.

As for mandarins, exports have remained more or less stable in recent years, reaching around 36,000 tonnes in 2013 valued at more than 29 million Euro.

The main destination of Andalusian citrus exports is Germany, which accounts for 32 percent of the total export value.