

## Spanish lemon prices under pressure due to Turkey's competition

Two weeks in advance compared to last season due to the mild summer temperatures, the lemon campaign started in mid-September with the Fino variety, which will be available until April, when the Verna variety, harvested until late July, will take over.

"We started the campaign earlier because circumstances were optimal in terms of quality and we were ready to start harvesting," says José Antonio García, director of the Interprofessional Association of Lemon and Grapefruit (Ailimpo). Additionally, the context was ideal considering that the campaign in the Southern Hemisphere finished earlier than usual due to Argentina's 50% drop in production and South Africa's lower volume of shipments as a result of the EU's restrictions with regard to the threat of Black Spot," he adds.

Now demand is slow; consumption is not taking off, in part as a consequence of the high prices that marked the end of the Southern Hemisphere campaign, and also because of the high temperatures that are still currently registered.

After the Southern Hemisphere's fruit is sold out, Spanish lemons have to share the market with Turkey's produce, which, according to José Antonio García, has been competing aggressively since its "abrupt" start of the campaign.

"Turkey's campaign has started with very large export volumes, around 60,000 tonnes in just four weeks, shipped both to its more traditional markets, such as Russia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East, as well as to Western Europe, with very aggressive pricing," he explains.

"We don't understand why European operators are pushing prices unreasonably down when they have been paying very reasonable prices for the Argentinian and South African produce during the summer campaign. European customers mostly agree that the quality of Spanish lemons is superior to that of the Turkish fruit, which is usually recognised by its less attractive appearance and lower amount of juice," he affirms.

"We hope the situation will normalise after November, when the volume of Turkish lemons will start to decrease and we'll continue supplying in a regular and stable manner with more acceptable prices," he concludes.

The lemon harvest prospects remain at 970,000 tonnes with satisfactory quality and very adequate calibres.

Source: [www.freshplaza.com/](http://www.freshplaza.com/) 23/10/2014