

## Argentina: Citrus producers predict difficult year

Dante Grigolatto, president of the Citrus Federation of Entre Rios (Fecier), stated that the exchange rate would also complicate the Argentine citrus sector.

"We knew that there would be 30 to 40 percent more output in the 2014 season and that it would be a difficult year if we were unable to export to the European and Asian markets to which Argentina was selling. It turns out that's how it was because we only shipped a few tangerines and almost no oranges," he said.

He said that the producers even had to add some money to pay the expenses of some of the products that had been exported.

The businessman said they were very concerned because the 2015 tangerine campaign had already started and that it would be a very difficult year for the citrus industry if there wasn't an improvement in the exchange rate for exports.

"We expect an increase in production this year. We'll begin with the first tangerines and end with the Valencia orange in February-March," he said.

However, he added: "It's currently not worth working as producing the fruit costs more than what we are currently being paid in the market. That is the consequence of not being able to export, there's an oversupply of oranges in the market."

A box of oranges is being sold between 35 and 45 pesos in the market, he said, but it costs 35 pesos to send the box without any fruit. The oranges are being sold at 0.70 pesos per kilo in the farms, while consumers are paying up to 10 pesos per kilo, he added.

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