

## **Egypt: Grape season kicks off with higher quality, smaller volumes**

Egypt's grape season kicked off in the third week of May and so far the results and prospects for the Egyptian companies involved in this market remain favourable. Taher Trade, a firm devoted to the export of fresh fruit and vegetables, started with white seedless varieties, and within ten days it will also market Thompson and Red Flame. Manager Muhammad Abdul Qader said that, "Quality is perfect and we have already started exporting to the Gulf area and Europe."

He explains that while the fruit's quality is perhaps a little better than last year, production volumes will be smaller than the company's usual 500 tonnes. "I believe this is due to the climate, as the weather at times has been hotter than last year. In any case, Europe only works with Egypt for the first 20 days of our campaign, so I hope the quantities will be sufficient for our schedule."

Regarding the situation in other destinations, Mr Muhammad affirms that the Russian ban has helped boost Egyptian shipments, although for Taher Trade the growth has not been as great as expected. "The political situation in the Gulf countries also affects the movement of our goods," but on the plus side, he assures that China is showing more and more willingness to import Egyptian fruit.

This improving relationship with the Far East, according to Mr Muhammad, is the result of visiting plenty of exhibitions such as Asia Fruit Logistica in Hong Kong, which has allowed all Egyptian suppliers to establish good relations with the importers." He states that this growing trust is also based on the fact that Egypt has good quality standards, and "We are able to offer the quality assurance and quality controls they require."

### **Belco**

For his part, Amr El-Beltagy, of Belco, affirms that "Current grape supply in the market is low, since the countries before us finished early. Egypt had a late start (due to the weather conditions) creating a gap in the market, but I believe Egypt is currently doing a great job in closing that gap with air shipments.

Amr added, "In the past few seasons, we didn't have many orders by air and relied on sea freight, but this year we are exporting large volumes by air." The quality of Belco's grapes, shipped mainly to the UK, Germany, the Netherlands and Italy, is also reported to be very good at this time. Customers are happy and prices are reasonable. It is expected to remain stable for the coming days.

As for the prospects for rest of the campaign, he explains that there is currently high demand for Egyptian grapes. "Volumes might increase a bit during the coming weeks,

but I guess the market will remain steady. Furthermore, the late white seedless production is not as high as last year, so I don't think there will be any oversupply issues."

Source : [www.freshplaza.com/02/06/2015](http://www.freshplaza.com/02/06/2015)