

## EU to evaluate Uruguayan citrus in April

A mission of the European Union (EU) will travel to Uruguay in April to assess whether the action plan being carried out by the country against the Blackspot citrus disease (caused by the fungus *Guignardia citricarpa*) is adequate to allow exports to continue as they used to.

This issue was reported by Blasina and Associates from data supplied by sources in the fruit export sector.

The weather conditions in the spring favoured the appearance of Blackspot. This disease had very low prevalence in the country until a few years ago. The MGAP, together with the private sector, has been working to stop the disease from affecting the export chain.

"Since last spring, steps have been taken to address this disease with new treatments, implementing a surveillance, traceability and documentation plan to ensure that all necessary measures are enforced," said one of the sources.

Marketing to Europe has not been affected by this. "At the moment, exports to the EU continue as usual," he pointed out.

Given that Uruguay's citrus production is intended mainly for export, the fruit's outer appearance is very important. Furthermore, in the European Union, which is a priority destination for the country's citrus sales, Blackspot is considered a quarantine disease, thus making the marketing of fresh fruit more difficult.

Blackspot is quite common and affects citrus production areas in other countries in the southern hemisphere, such as Argentina, South Africa, Brazil, etc. However, in Uruguay it only appeared recently and has spread as a result of unusual weather conditions. South Africa, which is the main supplier of oranges to EU, has been affected by the disease for more than 80 years and the protocols needed are very strict.

In 2015, Uruguay's exports to the EU accounted for more than 45% of the total citrus exports, reaching a value of more than 33.5 million dollars. The United States received nearly 24% of the shipments, worth over 17.6 million dollars. Sales to markets such as Russia and Brazil were also noteworthy.

Source : <http://www.freshplaza.com/article/155735/EU-to-evaluate-Uruguayan-citrus-in-April>