

Argentina is the biggest producer of lemon

This year, Argentina will produce nearly 2.6 million tons of citrus and consolidate itself as the biggest producer and exporter of lemons, as forecasts increased between 1,530,000 and 1,580,000 tons, the result of an increase in production of between 100,000 and 150,000 tons.

"Argentina's total citrus production amounts to 2,600,000 tons, 60% of which correspond to lemons," said the president of Argentina's Citrus Federation (Federcitrus), José Carbonell.

In 2015, Argentina exported 95% of the lemon it harvested for 600 million dollars; 70% of these lemons were processed and sold as juices, oil, and desiccated zest while 30% was unprocessed. The remaining 5% of production (40,000 tons) was allocated for the domestic market. Two-thirds of the lemon for export was sent to the European Union and to Russia. Producers continue working to open new markets.

"We've been working for 15 years to open the US market and I think we will succeed. The US market was closed due to phytosanitary issues. However, we are also working to enter the Chinese and Indian markets," Carbonell said, adding: "Anyway we have uncharacteristically closed markets, such as Brazil and Mexico."

Argentina has 50,000 hectares devoted to the cultivation of lemons, 90% of which is located in Tucuman, and the remaining 10% is in Salta, Jujuy, Entre Rios, and Corrientes. The country's lemon average yield is 35 tons per hectare .

The harvest, which lasts four to five months, employs about 50,000 people in Tucuman, the largest generator of jobs after the provincial government. In turn, there are 12 processing industries (the world's largest cluster) and some 35 to 40 packaging companies, which mainly hire women as a workforce.

Unlike the vast majority of regional economies, the lemon activity is profitable in Argentina. Production costs are covered by the purchase price producers are paid, i.e. \$2 per bag (20 kilos).

Source : <http://www.freshplaza.com/article/156697/Argentina-is-the-biggest-producer-of-lemon>