

New citrus group to defend EU interests

Committee unites representatives from France, Italy and Spain to tackle challenges including citrus black spot

citrus industry members from France, Italy and Spain have formed a new joint committee to represent the sector's interests on an international level, adding to existing groups already established to do the same for stonefruit, topfruit, tomatoes, strawberries and garlic.

As reported by *Italiafruit News*, the group aims to share its experience and analysis of the international citrus business in order to develop mutually beneficial strategies that can improve the quality and sustainability of production in the three countries.

Commenting on the committee's creation, which took place at a meeting of the joint Franco-Hispano-Italian Committee on fruits and vegetables in Paris this week, Elena Eloisa Albertini of interprofessional organisation Ortofrutta Italia said the group discovered plenty of common ground and matters of shared interest, including the perceived threat posed by citrus black spot.

"The meeting was very productive because we came to realise immediately that our objectives are the same. It wasn't a circumstantial meeting, therefore, but a real technical encounter covering several themes, the most delicate of which relates to controlling pathogens from non-European countries in order to safeguard our citrus groves."

The citrus committee is scheduled to reconvene in Valencia, Spain, at the start of November to plan for the new season, followed by a visit to Catania, Italy, in early 2017 to look at production of red-fleshed orange variety Tarocco.