

Spain: Murcia expects about 871,000 tonnes of citrus

The Council of Agriculture of Murcia expects the citrus production to total about 871,000 tonnes in the 2016/2017 campaign, compared with 713,000 in the previous season. This increase has been boosted by the strong 25% increase expected for lemons.

The increases expected for mandarins (22 percent) and oranges (18 percent) will make their productions stand at 137,000 and 157,000 tonnes, respectively. Regarding grapefruit, it is estimated that the final production will be slightly lower (-26,000 tonnes); 6.8 percent below what was achieved in the 2015/2016 campaign. Lastly, limes and other citrus products will see their production grow by 16 percent to 520 tonnes.

The General Director of Producciones y Mercados Agroalimentarios, Fulgencio Pérez, said that these harvest forecasts "entail a return to normality for the regional citrus production, following the sharp decline recorded in the previous season;" however, he added that "the sector is clearly concerned about the extreme drought in the region, which could result in a reduction of the fruits' calibres due to lack of irrigation during critical periods for the crop."

The region's lemon production for the recently finished 2015/2016 season stood at 440,000 tonnes, of which 355,000 corresponded to the variety Fino and 85,000 tonnes to the Verna.

The first harvest estimates for the 2016/2017 campaign point to a final production of 550,000 tonnes, representing an increase of 25 percent over the previous year. As for varieties, the Fino production is expected to reach 450,000 tonnes (+27%), helped by the gradual entry into production of new plantations in recent years.

For the Verna lemon, the harvest is expected to grow by 18 percent (100,000 tonnes). These forecasts have been slightly reduced, mainly due to the emergence of a late-generation citrus moth (*Prays citri*).

The General Director concluded that "if we hadn't had such adverse weather conditions, with virtually no winter, a long spring, and a persistent drought in the region, the crop estimates for next season would have reached even higher levels, given the planted acreage."

Lien article :

