

Spain: Heat wave to reduce citrus and kaki production

Since late spring, Spain has been suffering the impact of unusually high temperatures for this time of the year, which together with the worse drought of the last twenty years, is taking a negative toll on various crops, depending on the production area.

In the Region of Valencia, the high temperatures are having an impact on the citrus production, with the early varieties in the setting stage recording more fruit fall. "More fruit than usual is falling, and with very thick calibres due to dehydration, which makes us think that we will have smaller volumes of citrus next season," explains Carles Peris, Citrus Technical Manager of the Unió de Llauradors. "It is still early to talk about percentages, but for now, the decrease in production could amount to around 15%."

In any case, both Carlos Peris and AVA Asaja's technical manager, José Francisco Sales, agree that, for the time being, the heat wave and drought are leading to a significant increase in production costs. "When there is so much heat, there is more evaporation of water in the plants, so producers are forced to increase the frequency of irrigation. At the same time, high temperatures are accelerating the pest cycles in the fields, with the early appearance of mites, aphids or red scales from California, among other pests that affect citrus fruits. Therefore, it is necessary to start treatments much earlier, which also entails a rise in costs," explains José Francisco Sales.

Kaki producers are facing a similar situation. "There is more fruit fall than usual," explains Germán Gómez, manager of the producing and exporting company Persimon Select. "It is too soon to offer harvest forecasts, as the fruit currently has about the size of an apricot, but it is likely that we will have lower volumes and, probably, larger calibres, because there is less fruit in the trees. In two weeks, we will be able to see what the actual impact of this heat wave has been."

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