

Spain expects lower onion production and shortage of large calibres

The Grano onion harvest is currently in full swing in Spain, with it being the most representative variety in terms of both volume and quality. Although there is still September and part of October before the end of the harvest, forecasts indicate that there will be fewer volumes available and a shortage of large calibres. Due to the severe setback suffered by Spanish onion producers during the previous campaign due to low prices, the onion acreage had been slightly reduced for this season, to which we must add the low yields caused by heat waves.

"We have had two months of excessive heat during June and July, which is when the bulbs of Grano onions develop. The many nights with temperatures between 25 and 30 degrees Celsius have accelerated the plants' cycle, preventing the bulb from having the necessary time to develop. For this reason, if things do not change during this month, there will be a lot of medium and small onions and large calibres will remain scarce," explains Alfonso Tarazona, president of the Spanish Association of Onion Harvesters and Exporters.

According to the representative, there has already been a reaction in market prices. "Big onions are more expensive because of their low availability. It remains to be seen what the harvests will be like in the rest of Europe, but for now, it seems that the trend will be this," he points out.

So far, the results for early or spring onions have been negative in terms of prices, since "although the harvest has not been affected by the heat waves, as far as calibres are concerned, given that the plant cycle was already very advanced, there has been a clash with the large volume of onions from last season in storage," recalls Alfonso Tarazona. "The fact is that, in the previous year, the export of onions was reduced both in Europe and in third countries because there was an excessive harvest in almost all producing and importing countries," he added.

In any case, according to the president of ACEC, although export volumes to third countries were lower last season, there have also been shipments to destinations that have recently opened, such as Taiwan, Brazil, the United States or Canada, and volumes remain stable in the countries of the Middle East, where they prefer white onions over the yellow or red.

"It is worth noting that wherever Spanish onions arrive, they are usually there to stay. Our onions could be exported wherever we aimed to. Its best qualities are its calibre, appearance, flavour and shelf life,

with the latter being increasingly extended thanks to the new varieties that we have. Spain is greatly improving its service and exporters are increasingly professionalised," affirms Alfonso Tarazona.

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