

Spain: Valencia's citrus fruit production to drop by 20%

The first estimates of the Valencian Council for Agriculture, Environment, Climate Change and Rural Development for the 2017/2018 campaign point to the region's citrus production reaching 3,143,984 tonnes, which is 20.3% less than in the previous campaign (down 800,000 tonnes). In the province of Alicante, the drop amounts to 20.9%, in Castellon, to 23.6%, and in Valencia to 19%.

The main causes for this are the natural alternation of citrus crops, as well as the impact of last winter's copious rainfall, which affected the roots and weakened the trees and resulted in an irregular flowering. The high temperatures of May also took a negative toll.

This was highlighted by the Councillor of Agriculture and the Environment, Elena Cebrián, after presenting the report on the citrus production forecast for the current campaign to representatives of the agro-food sector, namely AVA, La Unió, Asaja, COAG, FEPAC, UPA, Ailimpo, the Citrus Management Committee and the Federation of Agro-Food Cooperatives. The Councillor was accompanied by the regional Secretary of Agriculture, Francisco Rodríguez Mulero.

The decline in the production is more pronounced for mandarins (-24.1%) than for oranges (-7.6%) or lemons (-16.2%). The estimated figures reveal that the orange production will amount to 1,526,706 tonnes, that of mandarins to 1,345,444 tonnes and that of lemons to 246,150 tonnes. Meanwhile, the grapefruit production will reach 25,684 tonnes. The mandarin production is expected to drop by about 427,970 tonnes. Worthy of note is the reduction of the Clemenules, with 243,225 tonnes less than last season.

This year, the estimate has been carried out on an area of 3,243 hectares, compared to 3,048 in the previous year and 2,247 in the 2014-15 season. As a novelty, there have been visits to all productive citrus plots, with 7,588 of them registered, compared to 6,399 in 2016.

The report, presented to the agrarian organizations and the media, also includes a balance of the end of the 2016-17 campaign across the State. Elena Cebrián pointed out that the Region of Valencia remains at the forefront when it comes to citrus production and marketing, with 3,943,213 tonnes, only 0.3% below the first figure presented a year ago. Valencian citrus fruits account for 55.4% of the national production, followed by Andalusia (29.4%) and Murcia (12.2%).

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