

## High hopes for Spanish Mollar pomegranate season

Favorable weather factors have given a boost to the Spanish pomegranate industry, and growers of a protected variety are expecting a strong season both at home and in key export markets.

Production of Mollar Elche pomegranates, which represents the majority of national pomegranate volumes, are expected to rise 2% year-on-year to 51,000 metric tons (MT) this current season.

A representative of the entity Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) of Mollar Elche Pomegranates attributed the rise to larger fruit sizing due to beneficial rains and younger orchards yielding more fruit.

“These [production] figures position us as the main pomegranate producers in Europe. We represent 75% of pomegranate production in Spain and we are world leaders in what is referred to as the Mollar Elche variety,” president Francisco Oliva said.

Improved quality compared to last season – both due to the weather and improving farm practices – has raised the industry’s hopes for a successful campaign.

Oliva said pomegranates aren’t traditionally consumed in Spain, but demand has risen by 20% over the last few years and currently around 40% of the crop is sold in the domestic market.

“These are very good figures we have been able to obtain thanks to the work we have been doing to increase awareness of the fruit and boost its value,” he said, adding there was still much room for growth within Spain.

“In Europe, we also need to increase our presence so that European consumers become familiar with the label that identifies us as having a fruit that is unique, special, and with different characteristics. In fact, we are renowned as one of the best and highest valued pomegranates in the world.”

The key export markets are currently Germany, France, the U.K. and the Netherlands. Russia had been a good market until the import ban was implemented in 2014.

There are also emerging markets in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, according to Oliva.

“Our main challenge is getting the consumer to recognize the characteristics that our variety has and getting them to place less importance on the exterior color when buying a pomegranate,” he said.

He explained that Mollar Elche pomegranates don’t have the deepest red color on the market, but rather than color can vary from a cream color to a more intense red.

Source: <https://www.freshfruitportal.com/news/2017/10/11/high-hopes-spanish-mollar-pomegranate-season/>