

Spanish oranges more expensive at season start

The first Spanish oranges of the season are now available. The Navelina variety is currently being harvested and marketed and is finding a receptive market, with prices 20% higher than at the start of the previous season, mainly due to the drop in production expected this year.

"We expect this year's orange production to drop by between 20 and 30%," explains Javier Ferrández, manager of Yafer Agrícola, based in Orihuela, Alicante. "So far, this drop in production has already translated into higher prices at origin at the start of the campaign. While the previous season started with maximum prices of around 20 cents per kilo, this year it has started with minimums of 24 cents per kilo."

Although Spanish oranges currently share the shelves with the last batches of fruit from producers in the southern hemisphere, like Uruguay or South Africa, and even from Morocco, Javier does not consider those to be in a competitive position. "The few remaining volumes no longer have a very good quality and European supermarkets are more interested in the new Spanish harvest; in fact, oranges are the Spanish citrus fruit with the liveliest sales at the moment."

According to Javier Ferrández, the fruit's price levels should maintain this trend throughout the season, although it will depend on many factors, such as temperatures or the volume available of other citrus fruits. "For now, our oranges are not yet fit to be shipped overseas, but as soon as they can be exported to distant destinations, the European market will decongest. As long as there is enough cold, I think the market will absorb the volumes available without any problems," he states.

"There is no joy in lemon sales"

Unlike oranges, Primafiori lemons, which started to be marketed about a month ago, have not been enjoying such lively sales. This is due, among other factors, to the lack of good marketable calibres. While the volumes of Primafiori remain similar to those of last season, a significant drop is expected in the volumes of the late lemon Verna, which will be harvested from April.

"The lack of rainfall has caused lemons to take longer to reach marketable calibres, such as 3 and 4. Given this situation, many producers have been forced to harvest sizes 5 and 6, making sales more difficult, although prices have remained acceptable so far. The lemon campaign is not developing as well as expected ahead of a possible drop in Turkey's Meyer lemon production that has not yet been noticed in sales.

Source : <http://www.freshplaza.com/article/184336/Spanish-lemons-dominate-the-German-market>