



Spain: End of Canary tomato campaign with lower exports

The 2017/2018 export campaign has come to an end in recent days for the Federation of Horticultural Producers of the province of Las Palmas (Fedex) and the Association of Producers and Exporters of Tenerife (Aceto). The season's results are considered average when it comes to aspects such as yields and market and transport prices.

According to a statement released last Wednesday by these two organizations, there has been a decline in the volume exported due to several reasons. In the case of tomatoes, there has been a 6% decline (the drop in the previous season was of 11%), which is about 3,450 tonnes less than in the previous season (2016-17). As for cucumbers, the supply shipped to foreign markets has grown by 1,863 tonnes, reaching 22,661.9 tonnes. In total, the volume of agricultural products exported in the campaign reached 74,733.7 tonnes.

The change in the transport system, with a switch from refrigerated vessels chartered by Fedex to regular refrigerated container lines, "had a severe impact on the campaign, mainly due to the departure and arrival schedule. The change not only entails a reorganization of the logistics, which is already hard work, but things have been made even more difficult by breaches in maritime service contracts," lament Fedex and Aceto.

The situation described has led to "considerable delays in the arrival of products to their destinations, sometimes exceeding fifteen days." The situation has also left recipients and clients unhappy, due to them not receiving their fruit on time. On a more positive note, the shipment in refrigerated containers has made the process more efficient.

Another novelty this campaign has been the application of Community Regulation 2031/2016, which requires phytosanitary inspections to be carried out on Canary tomato shipments intended for the Peninsula and Europe. "The main drawback of this application has been the delays caused," said the statement. Although the inspections in the warehouses have been carried out normally, those carried out in the dock have caused considerable delays.

The sector has asked for similar controls to be carried out on any tomatoes coming into the archipelago with the potential to introduce the *Keiferia lycopersicella*, although Spain's Central Administration has yet to respond.



The weather has also been a determining factor this campaign, as the lower temperatures recorded in the winter months, together with the persistent rains, delayed the ripening of the fruit and facilitated the appearance of pests and viruses, which took a toll on the plants and on the production.

United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Scandinavia

The market trends in the winter months, both in the United Kingdom and on the continent, have been very irregular for tomatoes and cucumbers, which are the most exported products. At very specific times, prices dropped quickly following the arrival of imports from third countries.

All in all, "the sector is satisfied with the season. There has been a slight decline of exports, but the production volume has remained at normal levels, and the surplus that has not been exported has either been shipped to the local market, donated to NGOs or used as cattle feed."

The volume of tomatoes exported this campaign has stood at 51,637.3 tonnes. Of these, 43,717.1 correspond to the province of Las Palmas and 7,920.2 to Santa Cruz de Tenerife. 43.88% of the shipments were made to the United Kingdom, 45.21% to the European mainland (the Netherlands and Scandinavia) and the remaining 10.89% to the Peninsula.

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