



Spanish citrus exports stable despite production drop

The Spanish citrus production in the 2017/2018 campaign, which came to a close in August this year, stood at 6.7 million metric tons, which entails a 7% drop compared to the 2016/2017 campaign, in which 7,206,200 tons were produced and 3,704,600 tons were exported.

The reduction of the harvest is due to the natural alternation of citrus crops, and in the Region of Valencia (the largest citrus producing area), there has also been some impact from the weather, especially the abundant rains recorded at the end of 2016, as well as the high temperatures in May 2017, which took a toll on the fruit setting.

Regarding the export volumes (with estimations for July and August, as official data is not yet available), the total has reached 3,615,583 tons, which includes 1,382,810 tons of oranges, 1,560,122 tons of mandarins, 620,206 tons of lemons and 52,445 tons of grapefruit and other citrus fruits. These figures indicate that despite the anomalously low production of the recently completed 2017/2018 season, exports have only been reduced by a scarce 2.4% compared to the 2016/2017 campaign (3,704,600 tons), which was the fifth best in terms of citrus fruit volume exported from Spain. 92% of exports have gone to countries of the European Union.

"Regardless of whether we have normal production volumes, such as those of the 2016/2017 campaign, or low, as those of the 2017/2018 campaign, the export volumes remain similar and sufficient to supply all our customers in the large European distribution," point out sources from the Citrus Management Committee (CGC).

Exports:	3,615,583 tons
Processing industry:	1,404,429 tons
Domestic consumption:	1,193,835 tons
Losses and withdrawals:	467,709 tons
Total production:	6,681,556 tons

"We must highlight the good market performance, thanks to the excellent quality and size of the fruit. Despite exports being reduced by 2.4% in terms of volume, the turnover up until the month of June has been 4% higher," says the CGC.

The juicing industry, with 1.2 million tons absorbed, plays a fundamental role when it comes to regulating the price of the production. According to the CGC, "improving the sales potential of quality



juices is one of the great challenges for our sector, and it is essential to make good use of the fruit intended for fresh consumption that has a good internal quality, but which cannot be sold due to skin defects, or their caliber not being very marketable. This is the most ecological way to get rid of that part of the production.

The reduction of the production in both Florida and Brazil, which are the main producers of orange juice, due to the spread of citrus greening, has created a gap in the supply that we must take advantage of, given the rising popularity and knowledge about the product in Europe."

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