



Spanish avocado production to rise by 20% in 2018-19

Spain is expected to produce around 70,000 metric tons (MT) of avocados during the 2018-19 season, which would mark a 20% rise from last season.

Of the total, 56,000MT are to be sold within the European Union (EU). The Hass season is due to start in November and run through April, while the green-skinned varieties start a little earlier.

“We expect a larger harvest than last year,” Jose Linares, president of the Spanish Association of Tropical Fruit, told Fresh Fruit Portal.

He said the increase is due to a rise in planted hectareage and increased productivity.

Sigfrido Molina, commercial director of fruit company Sigfrido, which has seen explosive growth over the last five years, said: “Spain has received very favorable weather, and since March we have had some very beneficial rains.”

Spain has been suffering from a drought over recent years, which has impacted on avocado production and limited industry growth.

However, Molina said that growers are now growing crops more efficiently and using less water.

“The new orchards are almost all high density, which did not exist here before. And with clonal varieties growers are fetching higher productivity and production per hectare,” he said.

Linares said that Europe’s annual avocado consumption has been in excess of 500,000MT, but in 2019 it could reach 600,000MT.

“We are increasing [in European consumption], not at the same pace of North America, the U.S., but we are definitely increasing consumption,” he said.

Carlos Ojeda, commercial director of Frutas Montosa, highlighted that the proximity of the EU market meant shippers could easily organize their orders and ensure the avocados arrive with the desired level of ripeness.

In terms of competitors in the market, Colombia has been significantly increasing its presence.

“Colombia is a country with a very good climate that is very favorable for avocado production,” Molina said.



“It has a tropical climate with great soil, with lots of different elevations – you can produce avocados from 1,600 meters to 2,200 meters, which means they can hypothetically harvest year-round,” he said.

Linares added that although European consumption was increasing rapidly, it was important that suppliers remain cautious and don't send excessive volumes.

“Like what happened this year with Peru, which sent more fruit to Europe than it could handle and that made the prices collapse,” he said.

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