

## Spain: La Ribera Alta requests withdrawal of 250,000 tons of low-caliber citrus

The Mancomunitat de la Ribera Alta has recently approved a resolution asking the Council of Agriculture to withdraw between 200,000 and 250,000 tons of low-caliber citrus from the market. The goal is to give the campaign a new push. The agreement was reached last week in a meeting which brought together a number of mayors of the Ribera and representatives of the main agricultural organizations.

The Association of Valencian Agricultural Producers (AVA) had asked the Council of Agriculture to activate a plan to withdraw the citrus that doesn't meet the ideal marketing conditions, since it believes that this would "revitalize the citrus campaign in a crucial moment."

The proposal estimates the volume that should be withdrawn at between 200,000 and 250,000 tons in this first part of the campaign. These should either be diverted to the processing industry or be used as livestock feed at a rate of 15 cents per kilo. AVA's calculations estimate the cost of this action at around 30 million Euro, although it recalls that the European Union foresees specific aid for this purpose, intended for producer organizations (PO), which could cover 50% of that amount. For the rest, the "implication" of the regional Government would be required.

The vice president of AVA, Bernardo Ferrer, said that it is a measure that has already been applied on other occasions and that only requires political will.

The Mancomunitat has also asked for citrus imports to be subject to controls to ensure that they meet the phytosanitary and traceability standards that are also required for Valencian fruit.

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