

163 M€ lost in first part of Valencia's citrus campaign

After holding a meeting, the representatives of the citrus sector within the Valencian Association of Agricultural Producers (AVA-ASAJA) have decided to organize protests and demand measures to counteract "the current dire situation that the citrus sector is going through as far as the incomes of citrus growers are concerned."

According to a study prepared by the technical services of this association, the first part of the financial year is yielding disastrous results for Valencian citrus producers, who already accumulate more than 163 million Euro in losses so far.

The losses caused by the latest rainy season amount to 91 million, while the fall in income as a consequence of the falling prices stands at around 52 million Euro. Also, the value of the fruit that has been left unharvested due to the lack of demand has reached 20 million Euro.

The partners who participated in the meeting expressed their outrage and despair at what is happening this year and said to be convinced about the need to organize protests. They want the Administrations, especially the regional one, to contribute to straightening the course of a citrus season that is yielding ruinous results to producers. Given the seriousness of the issue, and with the goal of joining forces, AVA-ASAJA will contact other agricultural organizations and representative entities of the citrus sector. The goal is to set a common front in motion and organize the protests together. "So far, the Government of the Region of Valencia has not paid any attention to us," says the president of AVA-ASAJA, Cristóbal Aguado. "We asked for his collaboration to withdraw 200,000 tons of small caliber fruits from the fresh market in order to revitalize sales and we didn't get a response. We are disappointed, because the Council shouldn't look the other way while citrus growers are in deep trouble. Some of the measures that we have requested are the responsibility of the central government, but the Regional Council should listen and stand behind the sector."

The president of the agrarian organization is very critical of the role that the processing industry is playing due to the prices it is paying. "The industry," says Aguado, "is blatantly taking advantage of the situation, because the international prices of juice are high. Its behavior is immoral and it would be preferable for producers to



destroy the production that we are unable to sell in the fresh market before giving it to them."

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