

## Spain: Government to support processing of citrus into juice to tackle price crisis

The Government of Spain seems willing to take action to tackle the serious citrus crisis of this first part of the 2018/2019 campaign, which is the result of a lack of transactions, the massive imports of citrus fruits from South Africa into the European Union (EU) and the collapse of the prices of the earliest mandarin and orange varieties. Spanish Minister of Agriculture Luis Planas guaranteed the support of his department to adopting measures for the transformation of oranges into juice within the framework of existing operational programs.

Valencia's Councillor of Agriculture, Elena Cebrián, informed the central government about the sector's concerns, given the bad start of the citrus campaign; a situation for which they have requested the adoption of temporary support measures. It is worth recalling that organizations such as AVA-Asaja have requested the withdrawal of 200,000 tons of citrus from the fresh market in order to revitalize the campaign. It has also asked the Council to develop a plan to allocate small calibres to the processing industry and to animal feed. The total cost of the project would amount to around 30 million Euro.

Cebrián also asked the Government of Spain to inform Brussels about the need to activate the safeguard clause included in the agreement with South Africa, which gives it preferential treatment in the export of citrus fruits, allowing it to introduce its oranges into the EU with reduced tariffs.

The Councillor expressed her concern about the development of the citrus season, with lower prices than in previous years. This, together with the adverse weather conditions, has prevented the normal development of the campaign. Also, there has been a greater supply of South African fruit than in other years, so there has been some overlap between the late South African and early Spanish varieties.

### Phytosanitary controls

The Councillor has insisted on her request to the European Commission "to closely follow-up on the impact that the agreement with South Africa is having on EU citrus fruits, both from a commercial and a phytosanitary point of view."

The European Union already has withdrawal mechanisms in place for the horticultural sector, which include specific support for Producer Organizations (POs) (cooperatives and non-cooperative PO's) willing to withdraw fruit from the market in order to tackle crisis situations.

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<https://www.levante-emv.com/castello/2018/12/12/gobierno-dara-ayudas-destinar-citricos/1807865.html>

