

AVA-ASAJA is happy with withdrawal of 50,000 tons of citrus, but demands more measures

The Valencian Association of Farmers (AVA-ASAJA) is happy with the results of the meeting held by the leaders of state agricultural organizations, commercial operators (both private ones and cooperatives) and the processing industry with senior officials of the Ministry of Agriculture. The goal of this meeting was to assess the causes that have led to the current crisis in the citrus sector and agree on the implementation of measures to tackle it.

The first action was announced by representatives of the agrarian department of the central Government, and will consist in the withdrawal from the fresh market of 50,000 tons of fruit (30,000 tons of oranges and 20,000 of mandarins). These will be allocated to the processing industry for the production of juice, which will be distributed free of charge through the Producer Organizations (PO). The volumes agreed can be revised later, depending on the market's changing dynamics.

The Ministry also reported that it plans to contact the governments of the autonomous regions with citrus productions to urge them to develop a plan to remove from the ground any fruits that do not meet the necessary conditions for their processing into juice and allocate them to other purposes.

Another point addressed during the meeting, which was attended by the general director of Productions and Agricultural Markets, Esperanza Orellana, and the general deputy director of Fruits and Vegetables, Camino Arroyo, was the impact that the trade agreement between the European Union (EU) and South Africa is having on the development of the citrus campaign. The Ministry's officials said that their department is already analyzing and rigorously evaluating the negative consequences of the aforementioned agreement on EU citrus, since having this information is a necessary step to be able to issue a complaint to Brussels and request the application of a safeguard clause or some other mechanism to mitigate unfair competition.

The director of AVA-ASAJA, Jenaro Aviñó, who was present at the meeting, said to be satisfied with "the receptivity shown by the heads of the Ministry of Agriculture;" however, he also stated "that the



severity of the citrus crisis makes it necessary to continue negotiating the adoption of new measures."

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