

Ambitious project for Spanish lemon and grapefruit

Ailimpo, the Lemon and Grapefruit Interprofessional Association, has approved the Standard Extension project for the next five years, with a budget of up to 4,770,000 Euro for the next five seasons (September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2024). The goal is to carry out actions that allow the lemon and grapefruit sector in Spain to be ready for its future challenges, including the development of promotional campaigns, the improvement of transparency, the achievement of financial stability or the development of Industry 4.0 projects, such as a Blockchain platform.

José Antonio García, director of Ailimpo, says that "it is an ambitious project that will allow us to anticipate many future challenges and improve our competitive position in the international markets, not only for fresh lemon and grapefruit, but also for derived products, like juice, essential oils and dehydrated peel.

Spanish lemon promotion in Europe, the US and Canada

One part of the project deals with communication and the improvement of the sector's image. Two promotional campaigns have been designed for the collective brand Limón de España (Lemon of Spain), which will be presented to the European Commission in April to obtain funding for their implementation in 2020 and 2022 in Spain, France and Germany, and for another campaign in Canada and the United States during 2020, 2021 and 2022. "We want to protect the leadership of Spanish lemons in Europe. Also, outside of Europe, we believe that the US and Canada are the non-European markets with the most growth potential."

Compulsory census

Also worth noting is the creation, maintenance, development and improvement of the sectorial computer system AILIMPO CENSUS, which will be used to prepare a census of producers, commercial operators and lemon and grapefruit processors in Spain. The aim is to have better knowledge, more efficiency and greater market transparency. "It will be an effective work tool that will allow us to know what the lemon production is in real time, as well as to learn about



varieties and their harvest schedules in order to make the right decisions," says José Antonio García.

Approved lemon and grapefruit contracts for fresh market and the processing industry

In order to ensure the proper functioning of the food chain and promote good practices in the relationships between its partners, it will be compulsory to formalize the lemon and grapefruit sale operations for both the fresh market and the processing industry with homologated type contract models.

"We don't want to blame other countries for the current campaign"

The current lemon campaign is being more complicated than previous ones. In this regard, José Antonio García states that "we don't want to blame other countries for our problems and fall into 'catastrophe' arguments. Although there is great competition from third countries, such as Turkey, I think we have to make an effort to address our own problems within the sector."

It is true that Turkey has been present in the European markets from September to two weeks ago. "We have been greatly affected by Turkey's competition, which has caused us to delay the distribution of our production and lose a bit of market share in Eastern countries. Turkey is a tough player, but it is playing under the same rules," says José Antonio García.

"Prices have not been as good as in the previous campaigns; they have been rather low, but they guarantee profits to all links of the chain. The harvested volume has increased and handling 1,300,000 tons of lemon is not an easy task. This month, the marketing of Fino lemons will come to an end, and we are already getting ready for the Verna campaign, which will start in April. The harvest is expected to amount to around 380,000 tons, so the supply should last until late July/early August," concludes the director of Ailimpo.