

Fruit and vegetable demand ‘booming’ in Europe

The demand in Europe for fruit and vegetables has seen a large increase in recent weeks, which is being attributed to the measures and restrictions in relation to Covid-19.

The European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Janusz Wojciechowski, outlined the increased demand at a meeting of the EU’s agriculture ministers last week.

“The consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables in the EU has been booming in recent weeks. Spain, Italy and the Netherlands report 40% increases, and Germany up to 100%. Demand is expected to stay strong during the containment period,” the commissioner explained.

However, some EU fruit exports have slowed down, particularly those destined for China.

Citrus fruits from Spain have been most affected by this. Exports of these fruits from the country usually peak in March, April and May. There appears to be limited opportunities to redirect these exports to other markets, the commissioner explained.

One of the primary concerns for the fruit and vegetable sector as a whole throughout Europe is, according to the commissioner, a shortage of labour and the availability of seasonal staff (both from within the EU and outside it).

The planting and picking season starts now and we need a solution for this. The availability of trucks and drivers is also of great concern.

“The logistical aspects are all-the-more important due the perishability of the products. Help here is needed to avoid any knock-on effects later on,” Commissioner Wojciechowski added.

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