

## Argentine citrus exports will be "paralyzed" unless lockdown regulations changed

Argentine citrus export operations will be "paralyzed" if the government doesn't take immediate action to roll back some measures designed to control Covid-19, industry body Federcitrus has said.

In a release on Thursday, Federcitrus president José Carbonell urged the Argentine government and its ministry of agriculture to act on the situation that "could affect thousands of families that rely on this activity to survive".

The citrus industry is experiencing difficulties with the movement of its fruit due to limitations on freedom of movement for workers, he said.

In the government's efforts to control Covid-19, regulations have created "unjustified" and "unpredictable obstacles" in getting fruit to domestic and export markets.

He adds that new rules "restrict the transit of essential harvesting and machine-operating personnel to the packhouses or other facilities", as well as the subsequent shipments to ports.

"We have therefore requested that the National Government immediately reevaluate the measures so that this situation returns to normal," he said. "If not, we will have to suspend the harvests, packing, and processing of citrus fruits and paralyze exports."

The Argentine Government has intervened in the country's citrus operations on a daily basis, he added, placing the burden of the Covid-19 situation on the shoulders of a particularly time-sensitive industry.

However, he noted that "rigorous protocols" are critical to protect the health of workers, and that delays and unexpected costs that come with them are "logical and justified during this emergency".



Carbonell cited in the statement that around 120,000 people work throughout the supply chain in the two biggest citrus-producing regions alone and that the industry generates US\$1bn for the Argentine economy.

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