



Egypt hopes quality control will secure its place as top orange exporter

Egypt is aiming to secure a second bumper crop of oranges this season in order to keep its spot as the world's leading exporter of the citrus fruit, producers and the agriculture ministry say.

The country has been rapidly expanding its citrus production over the last decade, but a final 10% boost in the allocated planting area for oranges last year pushed Egypt ahead of its main competitor Spain in the export market with around 1.7 million tonnes shipped out.

"Maintaining contact with neighbouring countries and others so we can raise the volume of our exports in a better way and committing to the highest quality standards for our export products are key points we're working on," agriculture ministry spokesman Mohamed El-Qersh said when asked how Egypt hoped to stay ahead.

Agricultural products are one of Egypt's largest export sectors but quality issues linked to the use of fertilizers as well as a Hepatitis A scare in North America in 2017 had in the past led to the loss of key buyers.

The World Bank estimates that Egypt only realizes 30%-40% of its export potential across key agricultural commodities and that around \$10 billion in food exports remains untapped.

Producers say that demand for oranges grew during the COVID-19 pandemic as they are a key source of Vitamin C which is known for its immune-boosting properties.





Planting and harvesting went largely undisturbed in Egypt in 2020 as farmers were mostly exempt from nightly curfews and other lockdown measures put in place to curb the spread of the disease.

“We were able to produce what the market wanted and something that only we in Egypt were able to do is expanding to so many countries in the past 10 years which other competing countries were unable to,” said Mahmoud el-Shishiny, commercial director for Maghraby farms.

Maghraby is one of the country’s main exporters and owns a sprawling orchard the size of the Lebanese capital Beirut.

“We took the hard way, we began exporting to far away places and opened up markets that were not previously available,” el-Shishiny added.

The planted area for the incoming season is around 500,000 feddans (519,000 acres), el-Qersh said. (Reporting by Mohamed Zaki; Additional reporting and writing by Nadine Awadalla; Editing by Veronica Brown and Emelia Sithole-Matarise).

Lien rapport :

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