

Andres Ribas, FruitOne Europe:

"Exciting transition expected for citrus from the Northern to the Southern Hemisphere"

The citrus market is preparing for an exciting transition from the Northern to the Southern Hemisphere in the coming months. "It's clear that Spanish and Moroccan growers have been severely affected for weeks by bad weather, resulting in considerable damage to the crops," says Andres Ribas of FruitOne Europe. "While they already expected a lower production of citrus, these rains will certainly affect also the shelf life of late mandarins (Tango & Nadorcott) and late oranges (Powell navels & Valencia Lates)."



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"Due to the weather conditions, the expected lemon supply shortages will escalate even further. In Spain, purchase prices for the later Verna variety are sky-high at the moment, and this obviously will also translate into higher market prices. Turkey also has much less lemon volume to export due to a very poor fruit set. Egypt has already seen sky-high prices for them, thanks to global demand,

particularly from Russia, the Middle East, and the Far East, and all markets that are starting to get empty of lemons," Ribas continues. "On the other hand, we see that the exchange rate is currently not favorable for Israeli grapefruit exports, while Turkey is also experiencing much lower grapefruit exports, and Spain is taking advantage of higher sales volumes and prices in Europe."

In South Africa, FruitOne, together with grapefruit, Tango mandarins, and Valencia oranges, has a significant share in the early production of lemons from the Lowveld in Limpopo, the first to be harvested in larger quantities. "Less than half of the growers there are certified for export to Europe due to the risk of Citrus Black Spot," continues Andres. "Clearly, after the Berlin trade fair, we see high price expectations in South Africa, at least for March, April, and June."



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In addition to citrus, FruitOne Europe has been distributing premium grapes from Peru's Ica region for years. "We pack top varieties from some of the best growers under our own Boutique brand for high-end European distribution channels, and they are being well received by specialists. We are currently seeing a large stock buildup of South African grapes, though this supply is being hampered by logistical issues, resulting in shorter shelf life and, many times, severe quality problems as well. It's now India's turn to send volume to Europe. Good varieties are also gradually being cultivated there, although they still represent a small percentage of the total export volume," concludes Andres.



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