

"South African citrus fruits avoid phytosanitary controls at Spanish ports"

The Citrus Management Committee (CGC), the association that brings together Spain's leading exporters and importers, has analysed the strategy followed by South Africa to tackle the pressure from the entire citrus sector and its response to the measures enforced by the Commission to mitigate the threat of the entry of quarantine diseases in its shipments. According to the report: instead of focusing its efforts on improving its controls in the field, South Africa has decided to avoid phytosanitary inspections at Spanish ports.

This despite the fact that the South African industry spent an estimated ZAR1 billion (€66 million) per year on assuring the fruit was safe to enter the European market.

The report goes on to say that when Brussels ordered a "symbolic" veto on citrus imports from that country in late 2013, when the campaign had almost finished, the shipments arriving via Spain had been reduced to the bare minimum (120 tonnes from January 2015 to August 2016, from a total of 1,106,984 tonnes imported across the EU in that period).

The report said South Africa avoid Spanish controls, by using other "satellite" points of entry, intended almost exclusively to supply the Spanish market. It said that Portugal recorded a 24-fold increase of South African citrus imports (2,445 tonnes in 2005 compared to 59,000 in 2015).

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