

Spain, South Africa and Egypt good for 60% of world trade

Oranges: Three countries run the show

Oranges are a major product worldwide. Just over ten per cent of total production, an estimated 6.5 million tonnes, are traded internationally. Oranges take up a place around position 5 both for production and for export on the list of fruit and vegetable products. For international trade, only bananas, apples, tomatoes and onions are bigger. For production, in addition to these products, watermelons are more important than oranges globally.

Many oranges are processed into juice, the number is estimated to be 20 million tonnes per year. Especially Brazil is a major juice producer. Of a 15 million-tonne harvest, about 10 million is processed into (frozen) juice. The US and Mexico are also major juice countries. In the EU, more than a million tonnes of oranges are processed into juice every year, on a total European production of six million tonnes. The value of world trade in orange juice, 4.5 billion euro, is larger than that of the international trade in fresh oranges, which amounted to approximately four billion euro in 2015.



It appears as if the international trade in oranges will not grow much bigger. Some fluctuations can be seen from year to year, but in recent years, a stabilisation is visible at a level of about seven million tonnes and 6.5 million tonnes exclusively re-export.

The international trade in oranges mainly revolves around three major exporters. Spain, South African and Egypt together represent almost 60 per cent of the entire international trade. Other important export countries are the US, Turkey and Greece. The Netherlands is seventh on the list of export countries. About a third of the total is mutual trade among EU countries.

The Netherlands largest importer

There is much more spread as regards the international trade in oranges. The top ten of all import countries is good for about half. Seen globally, the Netherlands is the most important importer of oranges. Other major importers are Germany, Russia, France, the Gulf States and China. All EU countries combined imported 2.8 million tonnes of oranges in 2015, 900,000 tonnes of that from countries outside the EU.

As is the case with many products, the Netherlands also has an important place in the trade of oranges. The Netherlands is the most important importer of oranges. Because a large part of that import is also re-exported, the Netherlands is also in the top ten of export countries. In 2015, the Netherlands imported a record number of almost 500,000 tonnes of oranges. If the export of all the countries in the world to the Netherlands is added together, it is an even larger amount. Besides the re-exported oranges also transit (without clearance) via the Netherlands. In the first seven months of the year, import was 15 per cent larger than in the same period of the previous year.

South Africa important for the Netherlands, and vice versa

Most oranges enter the Netherlands between July and October. The oranges concerned are almost exclusively imported South African oranges. South Africa is the most important supplier of oranges. Last year, the amount concerned was a record 215,000 tonnes, and it was even more this year. On the other hand, the Netherlands is also an important buyer for South Africa. During calendar year 2015 a record amount of almost 100,000 tonnes was imported from Spain, although that was far less during the 2015/16 season.

The increase in the import of Egyptian oranges is also remarkable. In 2015 it was 67,000 tonnes. This year, even more than 100,000 tonnes were imported from Egypt. The import peak from Egypt is in the months of March, April and May. The import of Moroccan oranges did not disappoint with 50,000 tonnes last year. This year, a quarter less was imported from that country. Moroccan product is mostly on the market in the months May, June and July. Furthermore, the Netherlands imports smaller amounts from Zimbabwe, Uruguay, Argentina and Swaziland. The re-export from the Netherlands is almost exclusively focused on EU countries, with Germany being the main market.

Spain largest

Spain, globally the most important export country, supplies, practically exclusively, to EU countries: Germany, France, Italy and the Netherlands being the four main countries. In calendar year 2015, there was much export, 1.7 million tonnes. This was mostly due to the good Spanish season of 2014/15. During the past 2015/16 season, there was a significant decrease in exports, 1.47 million tonnes.

South Africa: far less to Russia, more to Gulf States and Southeastern Asia

The South African orange export has been fairly stable at over one million tonnes for years already. In 2015, the amount concerned was 1.16 million tonnes. It will have been slightly less this year. The Netherlands is the most important buyer, but there is also much export to other EU countries. Furthermore, in 2015, a record amount of 270,000 tonnes was exported to the Gulf States. That was slightly less this year. Remarkably, the export to Russia also decreased further this year. According to South African export figures, no more than 75,000 tonnes were supplied to Russia, as opposed to the 130,000 tonnes in 2013. Russian import figures indicate an even worse state. Countries in South and East Asia are an important growth market for South African oranges, as is the case with other South African products as well.

Many Egyptian oranges to Russia

The export from Egypt has been fluctuating around one million tonnes for years already. In 2015, it was slightly more with 1.13 million tonnes. Over 40 per cent of the export of Egyptian oranges is focused on the Gulf States, with Saudi Arabia being the most important. The export to the EU, with the Netherlands as most important country, is gradually increasing. Significant growth could mostly be seen in exports to South and East Asia.

Egypt is the most important supplier of oranges to Russia. Last year, a record number of about 230,000 tonnes was exported to Russia, and this year it was even more. The main cause was that import from Turkey had completely stopped because of the import boycott. It is remarkable that Russian imports from countries such as South Africa and Morocco has significantly decreased last year, but this year as well.

Gulf States and South and East Asia increasing imports

The Gulf States are becoming an increasingly important sales market for oranges. Last year, these countries imported 870,000 tonnes of oranges. South Africa and Egypt are both the largest supplier, together good for two-thirds of the total.

Large import countries such as Germany, France and the UK are very stable (saturated) markets. It is noticeable that Germany imports (Spanish) oranges mainly during the winter months, and that import from the UK is fairly equally divided over the year.

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