

Spain and South Africa are increasing their surface at great pace

Lemon oversupply in Europe from all producer countries

According to Enrique Fuentes, who works at the commercial department of the Hijos de Alberto del Cerro company, from Murcia, the Spanish lemon sector's fear of having an oversupply of Verna lemons, the variety that is marketed the most in these months, has become a reality; not only because the harvest in Spain was almost twice as big as in the last summer, but also because other producing and competing countries have also filled the market with significant volumes.



Tyler brand lemons in a carton, from Hijos de Alberto del Cerro.

"Spain has a high supply of Verna lemon this summer, the harvest almost doubled last summer's harvest. These volumes have coincided with a large harvest in South Africa and Argentina. In addition, Argentina sent its lemon to Europe prematurely this year, because of the high prices there were in the European market. The Argentine lemons were available in Russia and started reaching other European ports in early May, when they usually start arriving in June. Meanwhile, Turkey, which ended its harvest a few months ago, has been storing its lemons in caves, as it usually does, and has been pushing its supply in some bordering markets," he said.

Another circumstance to take into account is the abundance of non-commercial calibers, which regulates the supply depending on the market. "There are many quantities of non-commercial caliber lemons, because they are very small or because they are very large. The truth is I had never seen a campaign with such large calibers in general. If we discount these calibers, we could say that there is no oversupply in several destinations, such as France or Germany. However, there is an oversupply in Eastern European countries, where marketers make their purchases based on prices," he said.

The markets are very quiet, even though "prices are still high in the field because we come from an inertia of high prices in recent years. There still is much speculation in the purchase of lemons in the field. There are a lot of people who buy lemons and then resell them."

Enrique Fuentes said that in the coming seasons, the volumes of lemons of Spain and South Africa could increase significantly, if the weather conditions were right, given the growth in the surface of cultivation. Meanwhile, Argentina and Turkey would grow at a more moderate rate.

The Verna campaign will end in the coming weeks. "The exact date will depend on the temperatures, but we expect it will end in mid-July," he added. "There will be a second flowering in mid-August, but these lemons have a lower quality and specific characteristics that are only demanded in Spain and nearby markets. They can also be sent to other European destinations, when there is a shortage of lemon, which is not the case this year," Enrique Fuentes said.

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Publication date: 6/16/2017

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