

Spain speaks out against RSA citrus imports

Greater availability of South African oranges is curbing sales of new season fruit from Andalucía, growers say

Producers in the province of Huelva say the availability of South African imports in the European market is harming sales of early season Spanish citrus.

Lorenzo Reyes, president of the Association of Citriculture of Huelva, told *Europa Press* that early season oranges varieties from the province, which are on the small side due following a hot, dry summer, are being overlooked in favour of larger, riper fruit from South Africa.

In 2016 the European Union decided to reduce tariffs on South African imports and extend the tariff-free period for by six weeks to the end of November, a move that Spanish producers argued would hit their sales due to the increased overlap in supply.

Last season, South African oranges were reportedly available in European supermarkets until January, putting considerable pressure on prices.

According to figures from the Ministry of Agriculture citrus production in Andalucía is forecast to reach 2.018m tonnes in 2017/18, a similar volume to last season.

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