



Tuesday 3rd December 2019, 16:48 London

More countries aim to join WCO

Seven additional citrus-producing countries are set to join the World Citrus Organisation

The World Citrus Organisation (WCO) is making good progress in increasing its membership – with a number of nations indicating that they will soon join the body.

When these memberships are finally confirmed the WCO will represent 70 per cent of the globe's citrus producing countries.

The WCO was launched at the end of October by seven leading citrus producing countries during Fruit Attraction in Madrid.

Led by South Africa and Spain, the organisation has been hard at work gaining new members. According to a statement issued by Justin Chadwick of Southern Africa's Citrus Growers' Association (CGA), seven new members have agreed in principle to join the organisation.

"Together the fourteen member countries will represent 70 per cent of global citrus exports – creating a powerful global platform for dialogue and action between the citrus-producing countries worldwide," said Chadwick.

The WCO was formed in October when sector representatives from Argentina, Chile, Italy, Morocco, Peru, Spain, and South Africa agreed to launch the new international body. The seven new member countries are Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Egypt, Greece, Portugal, and the US.

Southern Africa, through the CGA, and AILIMPO, the Spanish Lemon and Grapefruit Interbranch Association initiated the formation of the organisation, bringing the world's citrus producers on par with the apple and pear and avocado industries which have successfully set up world bodies to promote joint interests.

The WCO is administered by Freshfel Europe, the European Fresh Produce Association.

Chadwick says South Africa's leading role in the formation of the WCO reflects the country's importance as the second-largest global exporter of citrus.

"More importantly, the South African citrus industry earns R20bn in foreign exchange for the country and supports 120,000 jobs. The formation of the WCO is set to support further exports to the rest of the world, and create sorely needed local jobs and economic growth," he outlined.

While the WCO is still a work in progress, its aim is to discuss common issues affecting citrus-producing countries, exchange information on production and market trends, preparing scenario's for citrus trade in 2030, while also fostering dialogue on policy issues of common concern.

The WCO will also play a role in identifying and promote research and Innovation projects specific to the citrus sector, liaising with public and private stakeholders on citrus-related matters to highlight the importance of citrus producers and the need for a fair return; and promote the global consumption of citrus.

When the organisation's membership meets again, it will be in February next year during Fruit Logistica in Berlin.

The logo for EUROFRUIT, featuring the word "EUROFRUIT" in white, uppercase, sans-serif font, centered within a solid orange rectangular background.