



The European Commission will study this week the safety of citrus imports from South Africa

The European Commission, through the General Directorate of Health and Food Safety (DG Sante), has informed La Unió de L'auradors that on October 21 and 22 it will analyze with the Member States the phytosanitary safety of citrus imports from South Africa that enter the community market.

After reviewing the report of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the European Commission and the Member States will validate if the system used by South Africa to export citrus fruits to the EU is appropriate. They will also decide if they should establish cold treatment on these exports once again, something that La Unió has demanded for a long time and the only current system that guarantees the safety of imports; so much so that Spain - and even South Africa itself - already demand other countries use it in their exports.

La Unió stated that, on September 4, they sent a letter to both the Commissioner for Agriculture, Janusz Wojciechowski, and the Minister of Agriculture, Luis Planas, demanding financial liability if the European regulations were not adapted to the recommendations of the EFSA. In its report, EFSA questioned the effectiveness of the alternative system that South Africa was implementing because they were not applying it stating that it was a total failure. They also stated that cold treatment guaranteed phytosanitary safety.

DG Sante told La Unió that "the European Commission, after entrusting EFSA with the evaluation of the effectiveness of the current South African system to guarantee the absence of *Thaumatotibia leucotreta* in citrus fruits destined for export to the EU, plans to review the corresponding import requirements with the Member States. EFSA's opinion will be presented to the meeting of the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food, and Feed (Plant Health section) on October 21 and 22, and the import requirements will be discussed later."

More and more South African shipments are intercepted with pests

While Brussels discusses this issue, the data on citrus interceptions at this time of the year leaves no doubt that the system isn't working. So far this year, the EU has already intercepted 204 shipments with pests. Last year, they intercepted 203 shipments.

The rejections of South African shipments continue to increase and constitute a real problem. In September of this year, the EU intercepted 14 shipments from South Africa with pests (8 with *Phyllosticta citricarpa* and 6 with *Thaumatotibia leucotreta*). In the same month of 2020, the EU only intercepted 5 shipments from South Africa. Between January and September of this year, the EU has intercepted 33 shipments from South Africa with pests. In the same period of last year, they intercepted 18. In September, the EU intercepted a total of 24 shipments from all countries, 14 of which came from South Africa.

Source: [elperiodic.com](https://www.elperiodic.com/comision-europea-estudia-esta-semana-seguridad-importaciones-citricos-sudafrica_777556) (https://www.elperiodic.com/comision-europea-estudia-esta-semana-seguridad-importaciones-citricos-sudafrica_777556).

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