



The Generalitat Valenciana demands in Brussels greater sanitary measures for citrus imports from South Africa

The president of the Generalitat Valenciana, Ximo Puig, traveled with the Minister of Agriculture, Mireia Mollà, and representatives of the agricultural and citrus sectors to Brussel to convey to the European Commission the need to demand higher sanitary standards in South African citrus exports to the EU to prevent pests from reaching Europe.

After meeting with the Director-General of Health and Food Safety of the European Commission, Sandra Gallina, Puig said Brussels was more aware of the urgency of finding solutions to the pests, which originate from South Africa imports, that affect Valencian citrus fruits. However, he acknowledged that it would be difficult to achieve results in the short term.

According to data provided by the Generalitat, so far this year 172 shipments of citrus fruits imported into the EU have been intercepted with harmful organisms, 61 of which came from South Africa. Of these, 41 contained the black spot pest and 18 the false moth.

To avoid this, the Valencian government and the main agricultural sector associations have asked Brussels to require South Africa applies cold treatment to the citrus fruits it exports to the EU, as it already does with the products it exports to the United States.

"We don't think it's unreasonable to ask for something that they are already doing to export to the United States. If it can be done for those exports, why can't it be implemented for exports to the EU," Puig stated, adding that complying with the principle of reciprocity was essential.

It's an important step, but it's not enough

"Today, we took an important step: The Generalitat, the sector, and the Government of Spain presented the issue to the Commission together," Puig said. Brussels was totally frank about the problems there are to implement this, he said, acknowledging that the EU has very different views on this issue.

"The EU won't import South African citrus for a few months so we have that time to prepare for the next campaign," he stated.

The meeting was also attended by the Deputy Ambassador of Spain to the EU, Raul Fuentes; the president of the Valencian Association of Farmers (AVA-Asaja), Cristobal Aguado; the general secretary of La Unió de Llauradors, Carles Peris, and the president of Intercitrus and the Citrus Management Committee, Inmaculada Sanfeliu, among other people.

Unlike Puig, the representatives of the sector were not so satisfied with the meeting.

"We are interested in the cold treatment as a means to protect our citrus fruits, and so far we have not seen any indication that the Commission has this same goal. What we see is that the Commission is more concerned about trade than protecting its producers' plant health," Peris stated.

Source: [agrodiario.com](https://www.agrodiario.com/texto-diario/mostrar/3318893/puig-cree-ce-no-resolvera-pronto-plagas-citricas-traidas-sudafrica) (<https://www.agrodiario.com/texto-diario/mostrar/3318893/puig-cree-ce-no-resolvera-pronto-plagas-citricas-traidas-sudafrica>).

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