

Challenges to southern hemisphere fresh fruit exports and imports due to Russia-Ukraine conflict

In order to analyze the current and future consequences for exports and imports of fresh produce, especially fruit, ASOEX, together with SHAFFE, Freshfel Europe and Simfruit, held a webinar on March 17, which attracted many participants not only from Chile, but also from other parts of the world.



"We are in a difficult period for southern hemisphere exporters. Although the Ukrainian market is much smaller, the Russian market is more important and with more opportunities for shipments from SHAFFE countries, especially for apples, pears and citrus fruits, which account for 80% of all fresh fruit shipments to the Russian market," said Nelli Hajdu, SHAFFE's general secretary.

She added that there are now important questions to be asked, given the uncertainty generated by the conflict. For example: "What will we do with the fruit that we cannot ship to Russia? Are we going to redistribute it? Where to? Will we leave it in the local market? These are all difficult decisions that are being made, or that will have to be made. Also, fruit exporters in the southern hemisphere have concerns regarding the logistics, as there are ships stranded; goods that were on their way, but cannot be shipped or reach Russia. In addition to all this, there has also been an increase in container prices, as well as congestion in ports. It is, in short, very difficult to know how the season will develop; it will be a season of survival, as many are looking for ways to continue producing, and others are trying to find ways to sell their products," said Hajdu.

Europe will not be able to absorb everything

Philippe Binard, general delegate of Freshfel Europe, also highlighted the impact that the redistribution of shipments from the countries exporting to Russia, Ukraine and Belarus could have on the European market. "Europe does not have the capacity to absorb about 9.5 million tons if those volumes are redistributed here. We are at a time when everyone has to be very responsible about where their products are going to go and how they will be redistributed in the global market," he said.



Fresh fruit exports from the Southern Hemisphere to countries in conflict

Regarding exports from SHAFPE countries to conflict markets alone, Nelli Hajdu said that, in 2020, Ukraine imported \$795 million worth of fresh fruit. The main suppliers were Turkey (citrus), Ecuador and Costa Rica (bananas and pineapples), accounting for 48% of all fresh fruit imports that year.

As for Russia, she said that, in 2020, fresh fruit exports from SHAFPE member countries reached 643,084 tons, accounting for 17% of all fresh produce imports into Russia.

For more information:

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