



Conrad Rijnhout, VerDi Import: "South Africa noticeably gaining dominance on the citrus market"

The orange market is currently enjoying good demand. "There are genuine shortages," begins Conrad Rijnhout of the Dutch company VerDi Import. "At present, we're loading the last Egyptian oranges, and I imagine those growers are delighted with the season. They had nice volumes, nice fruit, and nice prices."



"Egyptian oranges are still being loaded, and they're still of good quality, something that was unfathomable a few years ago," says Conrad, who foresees another demand market in the coming weeks. "It's hot and dry in Morocco, so they have little fruit available and good local market demand. South Africa has yet

to get properly started. Still, we shouldn't count ourselves too lucky. Prices remaining too high will cause a reaction. Also, exporters have choices; the Canadian market, for example, has been paying good prices in recent years."



"South African grapefruit is trickling in, and sales are quite good. Grapefruit growers taking a more controlled approach to shipping consistent volumes weekly is paying off. For instance, they're no longer sending bins for processing or extreme sizes. Prices were at €18+ but are now down to €16 to €17," explains Conrad.

"Given the increased costs, that's still just acceptable." According to him, grapefruit still sells well. "Household consumption may not be as high as it used to be, but in other sectors like hospitality, still uses plenty of this product in, say, salads," Conrad continues.



Lemon prices are good too. Argentina's many internal problems come at the expense of efficiency and competitiveness.

"With its increasing plantings, South Africa has taken over Argentina's lemon market dominance. Last week, however, South Africa loaded slightly less."

"That was because of the rain. Initially, lemon prices were above €20. That was a bit too wild, but good sizes are now fetching between €17 and €18, and I expect this market to stabilize. In any case, the good weather we're having at the moment is conducive to lemon sales," says Rijnhout.

Finally, he calls the mandarin market remarkably good. "Everyone's far more careful than last year, which cost money on both the supplier and buyer side. Peru has, very noticeably, exported far fewer mandarins than last year. That supply from South Africa's not bad. We're currently receiving the Nova and ClemenVilla varieties. It's a few more weeks before we start loading Orie and Nadorcott."



"That's creating a positive mood on the market. Also, the exchange rate is currently in South African growers' favor. The overall fruit supply in Europe adds to that, too," Conrad concludes.



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