



Increasing shortage benefits Dutch trader

"The issues with Spanish oranges mean an increased demand for those from South Africa"

Inferior quality oranges and mandarins and a kiwi shortage caused by crop issues in New Zealand. In these times when the climate significantly affects harvests, it can be difficult to get good product. It is a situation that suits Jaap van Dijk of the Dutch company Más Frutas to a tee. "I deal with shortages. If a customer can't find certain products, they call me," the trader explains.



Jaap's company has worked successfully like this for the last two years.

'Replenishing what can't be found and in the best quality'. "For me, it's always: what's going on regarding trade and what's needed? If there are problems, people come to me. I then approach multiple companies to find a product. That extra mile is ultimately what keeps people returning to you."

And there are currently problems aplenty. "Consider ready-to-eat avocados. That situation is tough. There's very little good quality to be found, and when you do, the avocados are very expensive. Then it's a matter of knowing where to find them. That's my specialty. I work permanently with several major suppliers in the Netherlands. Because of the contacts I've built up over the years, I can get avocados now, which are otherwise simply unavailable," Jaap says.



Jaap van Dijk

Citrus shortage

"Another example is oranges and mandarins. It's been the South African season for the past few months, but Spain is gradually starting. That country is trickier for me because I mainly supply German wholesalers. In the Spanish season, you end up among the big players."

"My clients can order a pallet directly from Spain, which arrives within two days. However, there are issues with quality in Spain, and the first mandarins are always slightly greener, which not everyone wants. Then they approach me for the last South African citrus. That arrives in the Netherlands, with almost nothing going directly to Germany," Jaap explains.



"Those volumes are reaching their end, which means excellent trading for me. South African mandarins recently reached €2 again. People still want those last few."

"That's before the better Spanish ones arrive. The same goes for juicing oranges, which are popular year-round anyway," says Van Dijk.

"When big origin countries are no longer on the market, buyers switch to, say, Morocco, Turkey, or Greece. That's when I find the gems among the loads from those countries for my customers."

Distinctive wholesalers

So far, this kind of trading has treated Jaap well. His company has been busy since it launched in 2021. So, recently, he hired some extra help to keep everything running smoothly. "Most of our clients are still in Germany. I also know some wholesalers in Sweden and Denmark, but I haven't really gotten around to them. That's why my daughter and a friend are helping with the administration."

"I also have a couple of guys who go out to check out the wares for me. They're my eyes now. Taking a taste, feel, and a slice to be sure we offer good quality. We must always see all the goods before loading. That takes effort, but it's why our buyers return. We do this in coordination with LBP. This year, this Dutch freight forwarder has been our go-to for things like stock, storage, transshipment, and loading. We're well pleased with this partnership," Jaap admits.



He expects to be busy for a while. "These days, brokers like me are increasingly needed. We also work with bulk products like cabbage, beets, and onions. My experience in various companies means that, too, has become an important group for our company. If you can serve clients with that, they'll also come to you for the scarce, exclusive products."

"Whether that's well-known varieties, such as oranges or avocados, or novelties like apple mangoes. A shipment of those came in from Brazil the other day. You go with that. Those were gone so quickly that I still don't quite know what they are exactly. Wholesalers want to distinguish themselves; I can help with that," Jaap concludes.

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