

Europe's South African orange imports have fallen by 21% due to cold treatment

South African orange exports to the EU have been subject to cold treatment since 2022, a measure aimed at preventing the entry of pests into Europe. This regulation has had significant consequences for South African exporters, as it's led to a decline in their orange exports to Europe.

As a result of this measure, South African producers are facing challenges such as rising costs and slower transit times, which have resulted in an 11% in their orange exports to Europe in 2022 (when cold treatment was introduced), followed by a 9% fall in the 2022/2023 season, and a 21% decline in the 2023/2024 season.

In addition to this treatment, the European Commission has increased inspections in ports, a measure long requested by citrus growers in Castellón and Valencia to prevent the entry of diseased crops. The regulation currently only applies to oranges and excludes tangerines, but its impact is already being felt.

Given this situation, the association of South African producers is looking for ways to strengthen its transport channels and improve its presence in European markets. This strategy includes agreements with two additional shipping companies, MSC and Hapag-Lloyd, to facilitate transport to Germany, the Netherlands, and Northern Europe. In addition, South Africa is exploring the possibility of expanding its market into Asia, particularly in India and China.

Despite filing a complaint with the World Trade Organization, South Africa has not achieved a positive resolution, therefore these phytosanitary measures will continue to be applied in 2024 as in previous campaigns. It is relevant to note that while South African exporters are experiencing difficulties with cold treatment in their shipments to Europe, they have adopted this measure to export to the United States without major problems.

The Valencian agricultural sector remains skeptical about South Africa's compliance with cold treatment and has denounced the continued importation of pests in South African oranges into Europe. Valencia's agricultural organizations

are urging the EU to increase surveillance and ensure inspections at all European ports, given the perception that South African exporters may want to avoid Spanish ports because of their stricter controls.

Source: castellonplaza.com

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