

Carles Peris, from LA UNIÓN: "Imports destabilized the campaign with falling prices"

In the past decade, imports of Egyptian citrus fruits through Spanish ports have grown by almost 10,000%

According to a Government report to which LA UNIÓN had access, Egyptian, Moroccan, and South African citrus imports through Spanish ports have increased by 9,700%, 356%, and 177%, respectively, in the last ten years.

In 2023, only 3.7% of Spanish citrus exports were shipped out by sea, as most of the citrus is exported by land. In contrast, 56% of the citrus imported by the country entered the country through the ports.

In the last decade, Argentina was the leading source with 521,703 tons of lemons and a 33% decrease because it couldn't export for several campaigns due to phytosanitary problems. It is followed by Morocco (231,377 tons), Egypt (197,402 tons), Uruguay (108,271 tons), and South Africa (103,478 tons).



102,300 tons of Egyptian citrus entered Spanish ports in 2023. Spanish companies, most of them from Valencia, import the Egyptian citrus. "In their eagerness to look for cheap products, they consolidated a low-price market. They don't care that the quality and production standards are lower than ours and that these imports seriously harm our producers."

Of the total imported via Spanish ports, last year, more than 47,000 tons of citrus from third countries entered the Valencian Community, and in the past decade, about 174,000 tons.

In the last decade, 1.29 million tons of citrus arrived in Spain through its ports. In 2023, this volume amounted to more than 199,000 tons. It's the year with the highest volume since there are records. 73,845 tons entered through Algeciras, 64,776 tons through Cartagena, 37,883 tons via Castellón, and 8,221 tons through the port of Valencia. In 2024, given the announcement of the elimination of port subsidies in Castellón and Valencia, a large part of imports through Valencian ports are being diverted mainly to the port of Cartagena.

This evident import boom is one of the factors behind the significant decrease in the prices paid to producers and the turnaround in the second part of the citrus campaign.

Carles Peris, general secretary of LA UNIÓN, said that "in the end, imports have destabilized the campaign. The price of the fresh product and the product for the industry have fallen so much that the campaign will end badly for us."

LA UNIÓN defends a tightening of plant health protocols to prevent the entry of pests, the expansion of cold treatment to mandarins and grapefruits (not only for South Africa), the disappearance of bonuses in Spanish ports, and greater control and phytosanitary surveillance of border inspection posts.

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