

Giuseppe Galluccio of La California Group (GLC):

# "Oranges: The autumn riddle between the Mediterranean and the Southern Hemisphere"

As is customary, the Italian Valencia orange campaign concluded in June. "It was a positive season," said Giuseppe Galluccio, founder and sales manager of La California Group (GLC). The company operates in the Agri-Food Center of Naples (CAAN), as well as in Italy and Spain. "We don't have large storage volumes like Spain, so we were able to close with regular sales and satisfactory prices."

The market responded well, but the prolonged presence of imported Egyptian oranges complicated matters, taking up far more space than expected. Galluccio explains, "We had hoped that prices would continue to rise, but in June, sales dropped, and prices stabilized at around one euro per kilogram. Eventually, however, stocks were absorbed, leaving room for South African supplies, which have found a relatively open market, at least in Italy."



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### **Egypt strengthens its market position**

According to Galluccio, Egypt is poised to permanently impact the global citrus market. "Egyptian producers are gaining market share in various hemispheres. Their ability to maintain large stockpiles and distribute them across several continents is affecting both South Africa and South America."

South Africa began with higher expectations, yet orange prices dropped from €1 to €0.70/kg within a few weeks, from late July to early August. "Those who were unable to sell their early-season South African oranges immediately had to lower their prices to avoid stockpiling," Galluccio explains. "Today, the market remains weighed down, and the unknown factor concerns the late varieties, such as Navel Late or Valencia. If these pallets, which are normally destined for the United States, were diverted to Europe, there would be a risk of further price drops just as the northern hemisphere's campaigns are about to start."

### **The Outlook for October: Mediterranean vs Southern Hemisphere**

The crux of the matter will come in October, when the first shipments of oranges from Spain, Italy, and Greece arrive and compete with the latest supplies from the Southern Hemisphere. "If the two campaigns overlap, we could see a scenario similar to last year, with a flooded market and downward pressure on prices," Galluccio warns. This is why the plan is to sell as much product as possible by the end of October."

Help could come from Italian and European consumers who traditionally prefer domestic products once they are available. "We are very traditional," Galluccio emphasizes. "When Italian and Spanish oranges arrive, customers immediately switch to the European product. It's a yearly occurrence."

### **A closer look at Italian oranges: Blond and blood varieties**

As we look ahead to the new season, the starting price for early Navel oranges is expected to be high, confirming that a low-price market is nearly impossible to imagine today. Galluccio predicts that the Navel orange harvest will be similar in size to last year's. However, a 20%-30% drop in production is expected for blood oranges, especially the Tarocco variety. Nevertheless, all of this data still needs to be verified.

Quality should not suffer, though. The water crisis that plagued previous years has been overcome, and the plants are showing regular, healthy growth, especially in Sicily. Galluccio comments, "The quality is very promising, which may offset the reduction in volumes."



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### **Gruppo La California's strategy and diversification**

In addition to citrus fruits, Gruppo La California (GLC) is expanding its product range with a focus on pomegranates and melons. A strategic partnership with a major Brazilian group will ensure a steady supply of melons from December to May, helping maintain year-round continuity in the European market.

'Over the past five months, we have trained ourselves to manage an increasingly fast-paced and unstable market,' Galluccio emphasizes. "Challenges create opportunities, and we aim to seize them while maintaining strong relationships with our suppliers. They are the ones who give us the strength to serve our customers to the best of our ability."

### **"We are like SSC Napoli Calcio"**

According to Galluccio, the journey of Gruppo La California, a company born and raised in southern Italy, shares many similarities with Napoli Calcio, the southern Italian soccer club. "Just like the soccer team 'Napoli' broke the northern teams' dominance in football by winning the Italian championship, we too have brought prominence to a southern Italian company in a historically northern-dominated market. It's a source of pride that motivates us to grow further and look to the future with enthusiasm."

The football reference is no coincidence. "The championship title won in the final rush, just like the fruit and vegetable season," Galluccio adds. "What matters is arriving well-prepared and staying sharp until the very end, because the last few months determine the overall result."

### **Road to Madrid**

Regarding trade fairs, the GLC will not have its own booth at Fruit Attraction in Madrid this year. Instead, it will attend as a visitor with the help of a Spanish partner. "It is a strategic choice that still allows us to maintain international visibility while avoiding the commitment of having a stand," Galluccio explains.

However, spirits remain high. We are arriving in Madrid with 10% growth compared to 2023 and approximately 30% growth compared to 2024. These numbers confirm that our efforts are yielding concrete results.

The company relies on pragmatism, solid roots in the territory, and a competitive spirit. "We're ahead of the game," Galluccio concludes. "This mindset pushes and motivates us to do better than the previous year."

For more information:

[www.gruppocalifornia.com](http://www.gruppocalifornia.com) (<http://www.gruppocalifornia.com>)

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