

Eddy Kreukniet, Exsa Europe:

Low storage levels South African citrus

The market for South African citrus has been, in general, successful so far this season. Although South African exporters are finding more and more markets, the volume of oranges going to Europe is slightly higher than it was last year, "The difference this season was that the fruit arrived on an empty market, in which no stock space was created for the Valencia oranges," says Eddy Kreukniet from Exsa Europe.



Oranges

"The Navels, Navel Late and Autumn Gold season is over in three weeks. I expect these varieties to end the season at the current price. The quality of the easy-peeler oranges is very good; the Navel varieties will also find their way in the market over the coming weeks," expects Eddy. "In the upcoming weeks more fruit is going to come in because the Valencia variety will be in production in all the regions at this time. Normally, large volumes arrive shortly before the duty-deadline on October 15th, but I expect supply to be more spread out this year."

Lemons/grapefruit/tangerines

The lemon market has been stable this season with high prices, "Supply and demand are in balance, and a continued stable market situation is expected over the next few weeks," says Eddy. "On the grapefruit market there have been huge shortages and great prices since the beginning of the season. There will also not be enough fruit to bridge the season in the northern hemisphere. South African exporters cannot help but be pleased. A grapefruit price of 13/14 Euro is something everyone is okay with in the sector. Tangerine prices are also much better than the 'dramatic' season last year, "The market is filled with Clementines, Clemanova's and Nova's, and now Nadorcott and Mineola tangelos are coming in, plus some luxury varieties like Or and Mor."

"There are not very many alternatives to the citrus market at the moment. Brazil and Uruguay have limited volume available and Argentina is also sending hardly any citrus this way, except for lemons. The South Africans have consistently exported 35% of the citrus to Europe each year, but they also export to many other places as well, and that has been the salvation of the citrus industry. In the past, countries have been dependent on Europe, but now Europe is just one of the many supplying markets. The Middle East, the Far East and local markets are becoming increasingly important, and it is always about having the right mix of customers."

Citrus Black Spot

The threat of action on Citrus Black Spot is still hanging over the market, "In South Africa and here as well. I have South African growers who will no longer send their goods to the EU because of the threat. Suppose that everything stopped tomorrow, then you will immediately have a different situation. First, they found it in organic lemons in England, now they are saying they have found it other places as well. What makes this so difficult is that no one knows what possible actions could be taken," says Eddy.

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