

# Persistent rains have fattened lemons more than usual and reach giant sizes

## Detail Introduction :

The fine lemon campaign is practically over, driven by good prices in recent weeks due to less fruit available. At the same time, the first Verna lemons are beginning to be sold, whose volumes are expected to drop more than 40% according to Ailimpo and whose sizes are excessively large due to the influence of the weather. "The harvest already came with a forecast of reduced volumes due to bad weather during the fruit season. In our case, it has been reduced by around 30%. As there is less load of fruit on the trees and it rains continuously in March and April, the lemons have fattened much more than usual and reached giant sizes," explains Enrique Fuentes, commercial director of the Murcian company Hijos de Alberto del Cerro.



"Normally the markets demand sizes 3,4 and 5 and this year sizes 1,2 and 3 abound. So medium and small lemons are highly valued," he continues. "It is not being easy to convince buyers that there is a shortage, that for this reason, lemons of more commercial sizes have high starting prices. It will be more difficult to introduce large sizes since few markets are interested in them."

"Furthermore, we are not alone, since there are already South African and Argentine lemons, still in significant quantities, although they come with good production and sizes. It will be in 2 or 3 weeks when there will be significant volumes from Argentina and South Africa on the markets. Europeans," says Enrique Fuentes.

"It should be remembered that South Africa has gained positions in Europe, since before they were more focused on Asia and the Middle East. These are quality lemons, on a par with the Spanish product which is its best. Argentina has also gained weight in the United States but still sees Europe as an attractive market. According to the commercial director of this company, the competition with Turkey for the Primofiori has been stronger in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe. "Turkish exporters have diverted merchandise destined for Ukraine and Russia to other EU countries, seeking security in payments. Due to the fact that our production has been lower, there has been greater competition and pressure on prices.

"The change from plastic to compostable materials has been a challenge"

Hijos de Alberto del Cerro allocates more than 80% of its sales to European markets. In the last year, we have invested in converting part of the packaging lines in order to eliminate the use of plastic in markets such as France, where a ban on plastic packaging was imposed in 2022 on fruit and vegetables.

"Now we can make our fruit in the same formats that we have been doing, but with completely compostable materials, such as cotton and cellulose. Replacing plastic with these materials has been quite a challenge in addition to the fact that they are more expensive and their availability is limited. This has been very limited since the start of the war in Ukraine. We anticipate that other countries such as Germany and Austria will follow France's footsteps in terms of eliminating plastic. At the moment, we detect interest in these materials in those orders of organic lemon, of Zero Residue or without post-harvest treatment, in different countries.