

Pomegranate growers in the Spanish region of Elche usually ship a significant amount of their fruit to Russia, but the crop has been left off a [list of products entitled to €125 million \(US\\$167 million\) in funding](#) from the European Union now that the large eastern market is closed. 

In a release, Elche Pomegranate Grower and Trader Association president Francisco Oliva said the Russian veto on EU produce could significantly affect the upcoming campaign, which starts in late September.

The representative said 15-20% of production tended to be destined for the Russian market, but a further 10% often reached Russia through European intermediaries.

"Russia absorbs practically half of our exports. It's a market that has grown remarkably in recent years and that has become a reference destination for Elche's Mollar pomegranates," Oliva said.

"We will have problems in selling more than 13,000 [metric] tons that each year is destined for Russia in a direct or indirect way. Also, supply will be concentrated and prices will fall below the costs of production."

In light of this fact, the group has sent a letter to Spain's Ministry of Agriculture calling on a meeting with minister Isabel Garcia Tejerina with the aim of understanding all actions to be taken by the national government and the European Commission, as well as asking for Mollar pomegranates to be included on the list of items due for compensation.

"We are aware of what they are working on and that public administrations are making a significant effort to overcome this difficult situation," Oliva said.

The association release highlighted the Mollar pomegranate from Elche as a "star product" from the southern part of the Alicante province.

The surface area dedicated to the crop in Camp d'Elx and the surrounding area is around 3,000 hectares, with annual production of more than 45,000 metric tons (MT).

Around 40% of this volume is for the local market while the remainder is exported with Russia, Germany, the U.K., France and the Netherlands as the main markets, as well as countries from the Persian Gulf and Asia.

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