

An oversupply of Egyptian oranges in the European Union has one Dutch importer concerned about the price level expected over the coming months.



A representative of Netherlands-based fruit and vegetable importer Marni Fruit told *Fresh Fruit Portal* Europe-bound volumes from the North African country seemed to be around 20-25% higher year-on-year.

He said this could be explained by numerous factors.

"It's to do partly with the exchange rate from the Egyptian currency to the euro, which is now in advantage of Egyptian exporters. In the last years it was better to export from their side to the United States or China or Dubai," manager Patrick Konings said.

In addition he said the Egyptian campaign was characterized by a high proportion of larger-sized fruit, which he said was generally preferred in Europe. EU supermarkets were now "screaming" for smaller-sized fruit, he added.

Konings also said orange production in Egypt was far higher than previous years, and claimed the country's exporters offloaded much of their additional volumes in Europe.

"They have more volumes than last year. We always say that Europe is a dumping market for the Egyptian orange side - when the volumes get high they all send everything to Europe," he said.

Much of Spain's horticultural industry has been severely affected by heavy rainfall over recent weeks, leading to reduced orange volumes from the Iberian country to the European market.

Konings believed this factor was also encouraging Egyptian exporters to send more to Europe, in the hope they could fill a gap in the market and fetch higher prices for their produce.

"Because of Spain they think they can get more, but there are really high volumes. It will be hard this year. Price-wise it will be tough" he said.

The Moroccan citrus season has now all but finished, he said. The Turkish season is currently underway, but Konings said a huge proportion of their oranges was shipped to Russia - a market that is still unavailable to European exporters.

Marni Fruit received its first Egyptian navel consignment at the beginning of January, and the first shipments of Valencias are expected to arrive this week.

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