

Lemon exports from Northwest Argentina to the U.S. market were not possible during the 2017 season as a result of hot weather bringing forward the harvest, according to an industry representative.



The sector had hoped to carry out its first lemon shipments to the market following a 15-year hiatus after U.S. authorities [chose not to renew a stay](#) on imports that expired on May 26.

Tucuman Citrus Association president Roberto Sánchez Loria in May told local media *La Prensa* exporters had been planning to export a [symbolic shipment](#) in early June.

However, Argentine Citrus Federation (Federcitrus) president José Carbonell told *Fresh Fruit Portal* this had not been possible due to the regulations agreed upon with U.S. authorities.

In addition to the conditions set out in the systems approach, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) says lemons "would have to be harvested green and within a certain time period, or treated for Medfly in accordance with an approved treatment schedule."

"The United States believes that picking the fruit while green is an additional measure against the fruit fly, despite us having demonstrated for years that lemons are not a host or transmitter of the fruit fly due to chemical matters," Carbonell said.

The representative explained hot weather had brought forward the season and the ripening of the fruit, meaning that by the time exporters were allowed to begin shipments the fruit was already taking on a yellow color.

He said the first shipments were now set to take place in 2018.

"We would like to be picking lemons to send to the U.S. in mid-March, However, we could be 30 days early or 30 days late, depending on the weather," he said.

Carbonell also commented that the 2017 season in the fresh market had not been a very successful one due to low prices in Europe, Argentina's main market, resulting from heavy Spanish volumes.

"It's not a season to remember," he said.

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