

Peru is forecasting a 5-10% drop in avocado production from last year's record 338,000 metric tons (MT) as well as a longer season due to new and early growing areas coming online.

In addition, Daniel Bustamante of ProHass Peru told FreshFruitPortal.com that this season would likely not see the peaks that have often been experienced in June and July.

"Lots of orchards have either returned to their normal production or have suffered from the stress on the trees last year, but that big drop from the mature orchards will be offset by the newer plantings," he said.

Most of the new plantings are in the north of the country, and Bustamante said that while volumes from these orchards will be very limited, they will effectively extend the season by around a month at the front end.

"The total export volume will be similar to or 10% lower than last year, but it will be distributed throughout many more weeks," he said.

He added that Peru's slight drop in volumes combined with lower production expected from California and South Africa will likely lead to stronger market conditions than last year.

"We are seeing opportunities in the U.S., as California is producing almost 40% of what it achieved last year," he said, adding that South Africa's anticipated production decline of 30% will likely lead to opportunities in Europe.

The industry continues to grow at a rapid pace. This year along another 2,000 hectares of avocados are expected to be planted, which will enter into production in the next two or three years.