

As the Peruvian avocado season enters its final stages, an industry representative has said the industry has enjoyed much better conditions in the European market over recent months compared to last year.

Daniel Bustamante, president of industry body ProHass, said there is only 20% of the crop left to ship.

It has developed as initially expected, he said, with lower volumes than 2018 but a longer season.

"We have now passed the peak volumes of the campaign," he told FreshFruitPortal.com.

The industry will likely finish up with export volumes 15% lower year-on-year at around 290,000 metric tons (MT). Peru produced a record 338,000MT in the previous season.

"There are certain areas of Peru that have been impacted by a sharp fall in productivity," he said.

"In general, the central coast is the main production area. Last year's high productivity and climatic issues have affected the region and resulted in much lower production this year," he said.

Improved European market conditions

But the volume dip has contributed to improved market conditions this season in Europe - Peru's leading export market.

Last year, prices hit rock bottom following heavy avocado imports from Peru. In addition, there was a significant concentration of the weekly shipping volumes last year.

"[This year] we sent almost 60% of production to the European market, which performed really well, especially towards the end," he said.

Consumption levels have also increased considerably in the market, he said. This is partly thanks to promotional campaigns organized by the World Avocado Organization (WAO).

Meanwhile, the situation in the U.S. market was different.

He said prices were high at the start of the Peruvian deal amid low volumes from Mexico and California. But the situation has changed over recent weeks with Mexico sending much

more fruit.

And according to Bustamante, there was an increased appreciation for Peruvian avocados by buyers in the U.S. this year.

"Retail chains that took Mexican and Californian fruit before have started to take Peruvian fruit due to the reliability of supply," he said.

He said this is thanks to buyers' positive experiences with Peruvian avocados, helping the Andean country to gain a stronger foothold in the market.

Peruvian avocado season sees significant front-end extension

On that note, one of Peru's strategies to strengthen its presence internationally is extending its season.

Bustamante explained this extension has been focused on the front end of the season, which this year started around four or five weeks earlier. The earliest supplies tend to come from northern production areas, where volumes have been rising sharply.

"The early production from Peru has started to see much greater volumes," he said.

"The same cannot be said for the late production regions, but we are extending our early window. This is thanks to more volume from areas like Olmos and the Peruvian Andes region.

There tends to be lower supply levels in export markets during the early part of the Peruvian season than the later part, he explained.