

Argentina is hopeful that it will gain U.S. market access for oranges and mandarins next year, according to an industry representative.

A delegation from the U.S.'s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) recently visited the country to audit the production and control systems for citrus exports in the provinces of Entre Rios and Corrientes.

José Carbonell of citrus industry body Federcitrus told FreshFruitPortal.com it is "highly probably" the U.S. will soon allow sweet citrus exports.

"We have reasonable expectations that we will be able to enter the market next year," he said.

The development would follow the U.S.'s 2017 decision to allow Argentina lemon imports after a 17-year hiatus.

"The fact that we have already achieved the re-opening of the market for lemons makes things simpler," he said.

He said the volumes Argentina would send to the U.S. would depend on the quantity and quality of export fruit available, market conditions and demand from U.S. importers, amongst other aspects.

"Things always go slowly once new markets open. If you do everything right the market will begin to open," he said.

Senasa, Argentina's phytosanitary watchdog, explained in a statement the delegation had carried out a thorough inspection.

"The U.S. delegation verified the certification and traceability procedures implemented in the production sites, packhouses and exit ports of the fruit," it said.

It also highlighted the "favorable consideration and recognition by APHIS of the work of all actors involved across the export chain".

In particular, it said the entity had praised the efficient public-private partnerships that helped the demands of export markets to be met.