

U.S. imports of citrus through July fell by 7% year-on-year, with declines in limes, oranges and clementines more-than-offsetting gains in lemons and mandarins.

The country's total citrus imports were registered at US\$642m over the seven-month period, down from US\$692m the previous year, USDA data shows.

Declines for limes, oranges and clementines

Persian Limes - which are the U.S.'s most value citrus import category - saw supplies fall by 10% to US\$270m. Mexico represents around 98% of lime imports, with most of the rest coming from Colombia.

Meanwhile, orange imports through July experienced a huge decline of 34% to US\$69m.

Chile, the biggest supplier over the period, saw a modest 2% drop to US\$31m.

South Africa and Mexico saw much bigger declines in oranges, with the former's supplies falling by 56% to US\$9m and the latter's declining by 42% to US\$20m. Morocco also saw a big drop, with its supplies reducing by 56% year-on-year to US\$5m.

Clementines - the other top-five citrus category to experience a decline in imports - dropped by 16% to US\$108m over the period.

Chile, the main supplier, experienced a 16% decline to US\$67m. Morocco, the other major clementine supplier, came in 14% lower at US\$19m.

The picture was mixed for other smaller clementine suppliers. Uruguay fell by 2% to US\$9m, South Africa saw a 16% decline to US\$6m, Peru came in 24% higher at US\$4m and Spain dropped by 57% to US\$2m.

Increases for lemons and mandarins

The other two top-five citrus categories - mandarins and lemons - both saw year-on-year rises in imports through July this year.

Mandarin imports rose by 6% to US\$92m (although it should be noted that most imports occur in the second half of the year, when exports are in full swing from Chile, the main supplier).

Over the seven-month period, Peru saw a 7% rise in mandarins to US\$30m, and Morocco

saw a 1% increase to US\$30. Over the same time, Israel rose by 28% to US\$13m, while Uruguay fell by 14% to US\$8m.

Finally, lemon imports over the period saw a huge increase of 90% to US\$74m, according to the USDA data. Chile's volumes grew by 46% to US\$35m, while the value of Argentine imported lemons was registered four-fold higher at US\$22m.

Spain saw a five-fold rise in lemons to US\$7m, while Mexico saw a 21% rise to US\$5m, and Uruguay experienced a 15% rise to US\$3m.

Total citrus imports nearly double over five years

Looking at the U.S.'s total citrus imports over the last few years, there is a strong and notable upward trend, with volumes almost doubling over five years.

Citrus imports in 2014 were registered at US\$760m, rising to US\$862 in 2015. Then in 2016, they were registered at US\$939m, growing to US\$1.08bn in 2017 and US\$1.3bn in 2018.