

Spain's lemon season is now underway, amid expectations of a 15% year-on-year drop in volumes.

Grower body Ailimpo said the major lemon supplier is expecting volumes of 1.1m metric tons (MT) during the 2018-19 campaign.

The expected production decline is driven by an 11% drop in the predominant Fino variety to 820,000MT and a 24% decline in the late-season Verna variety to 290,000MT.

Ailimpo said that these volumes marked a return to normal after last season's record crop.

In addition, it said that the severe rain and flooding experienced throughout much of eastern Spain in mid-September had not affected the production forecast.

The catastrophic weather event affected over 300,000 hectares of agricultural crops, with oranges among the hardest hit fruit crop.

Since the initial July forecast, there has been a slight decline in the Fino forecast and a slight increase in the Verna estimate, but the total anticipated volumes remain the same.

The Fino season has just begun and is now seeing volumes build up. Ailimpo says it expects good quality and sizing in October.

Around 20-25% of the total crop is estimated to be processed - an industry for which Spain ranks second in the world.