

The European grape market is expecting heavy imports as delayed vessels arrive along with decreased demand in other markets, according to a Netherlands-based supplier.

“Peruvian grapes, in particular, are not being absorbed by alternative markets such as the U.S. and China,” Corne van de Klundert of Origin Fruit Direct told FreshFruitPortal.com.

“The total grape sales are somewhat reduced in the U.S. and in Europe due to lockdowns and quarantine preventing movement,” Van de Klundert said.

He said: “Although retail programs are working decently, the open market is a bit sluggish in the U.S. and in Europe as well, and when growers made the decision to move more volume to the EU, the market was undersupplied”.

However, at the moment volumes are up from all origins into Europe, particularly in red and black seedless varieties due to higher yield levels per hectare in comparison to older varieties.

Prices continued to rise from November throughout January, but have begun dropping this month as supply picks up.

“Peru, South Africa, Brazil and Namibia's volumes are up causing prices to begin dropping in particular for red and black seedless varieties, which are under a lot of pressure,” Van de Klundert said.

White seedless are expected to stay at reasonable levels fairly comparable to previous years, according to Van de Klundert.

The season in South Africa was delayed in crop development and shipping partly caused by strong winds as well as a reported Covid-19 infection of a crew member aboard a vessel.

Though there will be an oversupply of red and black seedless table grapes throughout February, with origins switching in March, industry members are unsure of what to expect of Chilean arrivals due to the recent rain the country received.

“By April, Chilean varieties should be taking over, however, that is going to be a big question mark because of the poor weather, which is a big concern within the whole industry,” Van de Klundert said.

Correction (26.03.21): A previous version of this article incorrectly referred to Libya instead of Namibia.