

The rains that hit the central-southern zone of Chile have had widespread impacts, including damage to numerous fruit crops. However, the citrus industry appears to have been unaffected and is in fact forecasting a year-on-year rise in exports in 2021.

In an interview with FreshFruitPortal.com, Pablo Osses, general manager of citrus and avocado company Crispagold, commented on the industry's export projections and its plans to increase its share of international markets such as China.

“Luckily for us, the rains didn’t affect the citrus industry,” said Osses.

For the new season that will begin in May, Osses stated: “This year's estimates show close to 20 percent growth. We will reach at least four million boxes of clementines in the industry.

“This is due to the fact that there are new orchards that are entering harvests. In Ovalle, the hectares of grapes that were reconverted to citrus fruits are already in production this year, which will help this increase of 10 to 15 percent more fruit.”

“The good results that we are expecting are thanks to orchard management. The growers have understood how to work the orchard and it has progressed year to year. It’s not because of automation. The orange tree is stable, only varying in irrigation and technical management that has been implemented,” he said.

## **2020 season and sales**

With more than 20 years of experience in the horticultural industry and leader of one of the most important citrus companies in Chile, Pablo Osses analyzed the previous season in Chile.

“In 2020, as an industry, we had a decrease with respect to orange volumes. There were 5.8 million boxes versus 6.5 million the year before. This year it is expected that there will be 15 percent more fruit and that we will reach the same level as 2019. I think we will reach more than 6 million boxes as an industry. This will be a year of growth ”, he said.

With respect to clementines and oranges, the principal Crispagold export destination is, Osse said: “The U.S. which absorbs 85 and 90 percent of volumes. Lemons are a different case because they are traded between the U.S., Japan, and South Korea. with a more stabilized proportion between 50 and 60 percent in the U.S. and 40 and 50 percent in Japan and Korea.”

“Each year we export 550,000 boxes of oranges, 180,000 boxes of mandarins, 120,000 boxes of clementines, and 35,000 boxes of lemons, which equals more than \$10 million,” stated Pablo Osses.

Currently, the commercial manager of Crispagold is working on a campaign to strengthen the local market in Chile.

“It is an orange and lemon campaign the consists of covering until March when local production ends. Oranges and lemons are exported from California to be sold in Chile, which we sell to supermarkets and wholesale fairs such as Lo Valledor.”

### **Growth plans in the Chinese market**

China is one of the principal markets for the Chilean and Latinamerican horticultural industry. In the case of Crispagold, they are focused on obtaining sweeter fruit.

Pablo Osses explained: “We are implementing new technologies focused on picking fruit with higher sugar requirements. In 2020, the Chinese market opened to citrus, which opened a door to all exporters and we’ll have to work to be able to position the fruit in the Chinese market.”

“In general, [China] is a market that consumes very sweet fruit. Chilean fruit does not arrive at the same level of sweetness as California fruit. We have worked on technical operations and have achieved a sweeter fruit. Last year we were surprised by the level of sweetness in the oranges.”