

The European Union has revoked its ban on Argentine citrus imports it implemented last August following numerous detections of citrus black spot (CBS) over previous months.

Argentina's Foreign Ministry on Tuesday confirmed the news, which means that the country's exporters will be able to access one of their biggest markets in time for the peak season.

Argentina took measures to reinforce its sanitary system requested by the European Union, such as the registration of production plots and their production units in the country where the citrus fruits in question are produced, the Ministry said.

Other actions include the assignment of unique traceability codes in these plots and production units where the absence of *Phyllostica citricarpa* - the CBS causal agent - was demonstrated.

The European Commission justified its August 14 decision - which had come at the height of Argentina's season and was due to end on April 30 this year - by saying that it needed to protect the region's growers from the fungus. There had been five detections of CBS in orange shipments originating from Jujuy in northern Argentina in recent weeks, the EC said at the time.

The Argentine Government has sought to negotiate with the European Commission, with around 50% of the exportable citrus crop still left to be harvested.

In July 2020, Argentina suspended lemon exports to Europe due to a high number of CBS detections in the market, putting an early end to the season for the overall category.

Industry body Fedecitrus said in August: "The immediate damage to the national citrus industry is difficult to measure, given that it's not just US\$40m of orange exports that will be affected, in addition to the effects of our early suspension of lemon exports."

"But over the medium-term, the damage is greater as the entry of citrus is blocked until May 2021 and the main overseas market for Argentine citrus is the European Union."

Argentina is the largest supplier of lemons and the fourth supplier of oranges to the European Union.