



They request citrus fruits be considered as a very sensitive product to imports from third countries

The Government of Spain asks the EC to apply cold treatment to South African citrus imports

The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food, Luis Planas, and the Minister of Industry, Trade, and Tourism, Reyes Maroto, have asked the European Commission to consider citrus fruits are very sensitive to imports from third countries, urging that there be no further concessions.

Faced with the forthcoming review of the economic partnership agreement between the European Union (EU) and the Southern African development community, including the Republic of South Africa, both ministers have addressed a joint letter to the Commissioners for Agriculture, Janusz Wojciechowski, Commerce, Valdis Dombrovskis, and Health, Stella Kyriakides.

[You can read the letter addressed to the EC here.](#)

https://www.mapa.gob.es/es/prensa/210930cartagobiernoacecitricos_tcm30-576782.pdf

In their letter, Planas and Maroto stated that Spanish production must comply with the demanding community production model and that, due to the lack of reciprocity in trade agreements, the next review of the agreement should not offer additional concessions for citrus imports.

The production and export of citrus fruits are of crucial importance for the Spanish agricultural food sector as a whole and have a direct impact on the rural economies of the production areas.

Since the signing of the agreement, South Africa has notably increased its exports to the EU, its citrus production potential, and extended its production period, a situation that puts at risk the complementarity in marketing that its location in the southern hemisphere gave it, the Ministers stated.

Earlier this month, after the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) recently presented its report, Minister Planas addressed a letter to Commissioner Kyriakides asking the Commission to remain vigilant with phytosanitary conditions to introduce citrus fruits into EU territory.

In his letter, the minister stated that, according to the scientific result of the EFSA report, the measures established by South Africa to prevent the entry of the orange tree moth (*Thaumatotibia leucotreta*) into the EU are not only insufficient to do so, they are also not applied correctly.

He asked the EC to review the control system and replace it with a system that requires cold treatment for citrus imports from countries affected by the pest.

Spain's citrus sector makes an average of 2,500 million euro per year and accounts for 4.9% of the Spanish agricultural production and 32.5% of its fruit production. Spanish citrus growers harvest 60% of all the EU citrus production, which places Spain as the main citrus producer in the EU and the world's fifth-biggest producer of citrus.

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