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Canada, the largest importer of EU lemon outside of Europe



Madrid (ots) -

- The European Union is the world's leading exporter of fresh lemons, with 127,785 tons marketed outside its borders at the close of the 2021/2022 season
- "Canada demands quality and sustainable products from us at all levels," explains José Antonio García, director of the Spanish Interprofessional Association of Lemon and Grapefruit

Lemon is trending. Fresh consumption of this citrus fruit has increased by 25% over the last five years, reaching **6,973,000 tons in 2022**, according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). This is because **it is one of the stars of the popular Mediterranean diet**, ranked among the healthiest in the world by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The European Union is the main exporter of fresh lemons internationally, with 127,785 tons exported at the end of the 2021/2022 season, thanks to the production of the **Spanish lemon** sector, which in the same period harvested 1,221,000 tons, according to data provided by the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (known by its Spanish acronym, MAPA).

The European lemon production is shared between Spain, Italy, Greece, Portugal, France, Cyprus, Malta, and Croatia, the Mediterranean basin. But according to the European Commission, Spanish lemons alone account for almost 78% of the total product harvested.

Canada imports 5,698.5 tons of European lemons

Most of the lemon from the European Union is marketed in Europe, with the United Kingdom and Switzerland - which do not belong to the list of 27 member states- leading the way. However, **Canada has established itself as the leading importer of European lemons outside of Europe**. Specifically, during the last harvest window, which ran from September 2021 to August 2022, where Canada **imported 5,698.5 tons, with total value of €6.62 million**.

"We have been working for several years to increase the presence of European lemons in countries as important as the United States and Canada in terms of trade. These markets demand quality and sustainable products from us at all levels", **José Antonio García**, director of the **Interprofessional Association of Spanish Lemons and Grapefruit (AILIMPO)**, explains.

The European Union is a reference area for lemon growing in the world. This privileged position is no coincidence, because behind it lies the work carried out by organisations such as AILIMPO which, as well as defending the interests of the sector, have acted as a driving force in its development towards a production system with greater **social, economic, and environmental sustainability**; as well as striving to reduce production costs, increase productivity and increase **innovation** at all levels. In short, it's been dedicated to ensuring that all agents in the sector, producers, warehouses and industry, prepare and improve.

Promotion of Spanish and European lemons

But AILIMPO has gone beyond the productive and commercial sphere and has launched the **"Welcome to the Lemon Age"** campaign, which began in 2020 and ends in 2023, being the most important communication action of the interprofessional in recent years. This initiative, funded by the European Union, aims to promote the positioning of European lemons in Germany, France, Spain, the United States and Canada so that the product's differentiating characteristics such as its quality, sustainability, freshness, traceability, and food safety are valued. Its leitmotif is to maintain and increase lemon consumption, making it more attractive to new generations of consumers.

About AILIMPO

AILIMPO is a Spanish interprofessional organization, based in Murcia, officially recognized by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food of Spain and the European Commission, which represents the economic interests of producers, cooperatives, exporters and the industry of lemon and grapefruit. A sector in which Spain is the world leader in fresh exports and ranks second as a processing country, with an annual turnover of 700 million euros, generating 20,000 direct jobs and transferring more than 250 million euros to ancillary industries.

More information at www.thelemonage.com

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