Spain: Concern and uncertainty in the fruit and vegetable sector by the 'yes' to the Brexit

The 'Yes' by citizenship on leaving the United Kingdom of the European Union (Brexit) has generated a climate of concern and uncertainty among the Spanish fruit and vegetable sector, since this country is the third largest market for Spanish exports of fruit and fresh vegetables, with 1.1 million tons, according to the Spanish Federation of Producers and Exporters of Fruits, vegetables, Flowers and live Plants (FEPEX). A figure which represents 11.4% of total exports in 2015, worth 1,614 million euros.

For FEPEX, "the Brexit should not affect trade in fruit and vegetables". "Right now, it points, the main concern of the fruit and vegetable sector is derived from the evolution of the exchange rate of the pound against the euro and other competing countries."

The volume exported by Spain to United Kingdom in 2015, a total of 787,093 tons, were vegetables, 1% less than in 2014, worth EUR 732.7 million (+ 8.6%), with exports tomato, with 142,268 tonnes (+ 6%) and 145.7 million euros (+ 7.5%), cabbage, with 118,549 tonnes (-8%) and 136.3 million euros (+ 4%), lettuce 115,220 tonnes (-8%) and 103 million euros (-4%) and onion with 100,916 tonnes (-8%) and 38.2 million euros (+ 24%).

FEPEX also highlights a second group of vegetables with large volumes of exports to UK, as the cucumber with 79,640 tons (+ 1%) for a value of 59 million euros (+ 7%) and peppers with 59,399 tons (+ 25%) worth 71 million euros.

Fruit exports to Britain stood at 676,078 tons, 4.6% more than in 2014 for a value of 881.9 million euros (+ 15%). Tangerine, orange, lemon, melon, grapes, nectarines and watermelon were the main fruits exported.

The export of fresh fruits and vegetables to the United Kingdom is distributed throughout every month of the year, being December, with 161,702 tons, January, with 153,472 tons, and March, with 160,623 tons, the months which concentrated higher volumes.

Export volume rising

The evolution of Spanish exports of fresh fruits and vegetables to the UK has been growing in recent years, always exceeding 1.1 million tons, ranking third among the main target countries, after Germany and France. In the past five years, exports to Britain grew 29% from 1.13 million tons in 2010 to 1,460,000 tons in 2015.

The main Community supplier of fruits and vegetables in the UK, is Spain distantly followed by Netherlands, with 685,796 tonnes, France, with 233,586 tons, Germany, with 186,663 tons, Ireland, with 170,406 tons and Italy, with 120,090 tons, according to Eurostat data from 2015 incomplete.

Outside the EU, the main providers of UK are South Africa, with 318,839 tons in 2014, Costa Rica, with 340,806 tons, and the Dominican Republic, with 196,202 tons. In the case of South Africa's main imports from UK are citrus and grape, in the case of Costa Rica are banana and pineapple, and in Dominican Republic are bananas.

Spanish exports of fruit and vegetables in 2015 to the United Kingdom, by products and months is available, then in volume and in value.

Source: FEPEX