Market of imported citrus in China low in first two quarters

"Due to major influences such as the China-US trade war and Covid-19, the overall market for citrus from Egypt, Spain, and the United States this season is not as good as in previous years. Due to the pandemic, most of the importers have been exercising more caution and reduced their imports. It is currently peak sales season for citrus from South Africa. Although the market is gradually recovering, sales are still lower than last year," a citrus importer in Guangzhou Jiangnan Market shared.

"The citrus season in South Africa starts in early April and lasts through October. Recently, there are 200-250 containers of grapefruit from this country arriving in China each week. Prices of South African citrus this season are generally lower than the same period in previous years. With the increase in the arrived volume, the price of grapefruit from South Africa in our market has dropped from the initial 300-310 yuan per carton to 110-130 yuan."

"The citrus season in the US is nearing its completion and citrus from Australia has also arrived on the market. In general, we have lower expectations for this season.

"On the one hand, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the momentum of market consumption has not yet fully recovered and downstream customers are having low demand for expensive fruits, which has increased the pressure on importers, so there is only a good market when there is a severe shortage present. Reaching consensus with foreign partners and asserting control on quality, cost, and cooperation mode is the only way for importers in China to get out of this swamp.

"On the other hand, the lower purchasing power of consumers has forced downstream intermediate purchasers to raise the requirements for fruit quality. With the pandemic, the competitiveness of fruit that has no rigid demand or is of average quality has dropped significantly compared with previous years."

“In June, the demand for oranges in the market is gradually increasing, mainly due to the market gap brought by the decrease in the imports of oranges from Egypt and Spain due to the global pandemic, coupled with the ending in the US orange season. However, this is only temporary, as the volume of South African oranges is expected to reach a small peak within the next few weeks. For South African citrus, the good news is that the quality of early sweet oranges is better than last year; at least the firmness is good.”

When it comes to Chilean citrus, which has only recently gained approval for export to China, the importer said, "I personally think that although more and more people will slowly get to know Chilean citrus, imports in the short term will not be large, especially under the current complex climate with so many uncertainties. In addition, we have to be cautious about the quality control of Chilean citrus. Nevertheless, it is on the list of our import items for the future.”

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