

FL(15)2847:1/DDJ/mb

Mr Ladislav Miko  
DG SANCO  
European Commission  
Rue de la Loi 200  
B-1049 Brussels

Brussels, 8th April 2015

Re: Import control measures for Citrus Black Spot

Dear Sir,

Black Spot is a disease that is not present in Europe and its presence could have disastrous consequences on the citrus sector in producing regions. Copa and Cogeca would like to remind you of the recommendations published by the European Food Safety Authority, EFSA, which warned that the European Commission should not underestimate the risk of the aforementioned disease spreading and contaminating European groves.

The new import season for South African citrus fruit is now beginning. Some days ago, we read an announcement that South African traders would stop sending citrus fruit to Spain in 2015. The controls criticised in their announcement were carried out in 2014 in Spain. The control authorities in Spain and in all other European countries are staffed by highly qualified professionals, who work exclusively to prevent extremely serious phytosanitary risks, in line with European protocols. With reference to this serious plant health risk, Copa and Cogeca advocate the following:

- EU decisions should be considered as matters of urgency. They must be made independently of any unilateral decisions that are announced, publicised or adopted by the South African authorities or by their citrus sector.
- It is of the utmost importance, now more than ever, to work on coordinating and harmonising inspections that are carried out at the borders of the rest of the Member States. This is a European phytosanitary problem, which requires a protection strategy that is coordinated from Brussels.
- Given the South African sector's attitude and the experience gained in 2013 and 2014 when 35 and 28 interceptions respectively were recorded, the EU should take new measures and enforce its Implementing Decision from 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014, to establish:
  - Greater phytosanitary controls at ports of entry and especially in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

- An article that allows the EU to decide to automatically close its border on a precautionary basis, regardless of the location. This would apply to fruit in transit and fruit intended for processing, and would be automatically implemented by the Commission. It would not be subject to endless discussions with the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pekka Pesonen', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Pekka Pesonen  
Secretary General

cc: Michael Flüh, Dana Irina Simion, Harry Arijs, Gema Vila-Cambra