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EU reaffirms banana price assurance



Commission seeks to reassure European growers that there will be no further cuts to import tariff

The European Commission has confirmed that it will not reduce tariffs on banana imports from third countries from the current level of €75 per tonne in order to prevent damaging European production.

The statement was made at a meeting between Canary Island producer organisation Asprocan, the Association of European Banana and Plantain Producers, APEB, Canary Island Agriculture Minister Alicia Vanoostende and the director general of agriculture of the European Commission.

Together, the Canary Islands, Madeira, Guadeloupe and

Martinique produce around 700,000 tonnes of bananas and plantains a year, most of which are sold in Europe.

In recent years they have faced growing pressure from Latin American suppliers, which make up 75 per cent of the EU banana market and have been steadily increasing their export volume over the past decade.

Exports of Latin American bananas to the EU climbed 27 per cent between 2012 and 2018, from 5.1m tonnes to 6.5m tonnes. Prices, however, have been falling – from €14.1 per box in 2015 to €11.9 per box in 2018.

European producers argue that these prices are unsustainable as they have higher production costs and have to comply with the EU's strict environmental and phytosanitary standards.

The meeting also discussed the implications of the new European Green Deal, which aims to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, for intra-community banana producers.