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By Maura Maxwell

Friday 26th April 2019, 10:03 GMT

## Sun shines on Spanish stonefruit

Production bounces back after last year's shortfall and quality reported to be good



**F**avourable growing conditions herald an auspicious start to the 2019 Spanish stonefruit campaign, with good quality reported in all the main producing areas.

During a meeting of Fepex's Stonefruit Committee in Madrid on Thursday to analyse the new season forecasts, growers said they expected a return to normal volumes after last year's deficit which affected not only Spain but much of Europe.

In Andalucía, where the season has already begun, harvesting got underway slightly earlier than last year and the size profile is reported to be somewhat larger than average.

Harvesting has also started in Murcia and the season will be in full swing by next week. Here too, growers are reporting good quality and similar volumes to last year in peaches, nectarines and flat

peaches, while apricot volumes are expected to fall by 25-30 per cent due to adverse weather.

Parts of Extremadura, meanwhile, have been affected by rain and hail storms in the past two weeks. Although the extent of the damage has yet to be assessed, the overall volume is expected to be similar to that of previous campaigns, while plum production is higher than last year.

In north-eastern Spain, growers in Aragon are reporting a slightly later campaign, while Catalonia expects a similar volume to the 2017 campaign.

In 2018 Spain exported 328,378 tonnes of peaches a fall of 15.6 per cent on the previous year, but the value of exports increased by 1.5 per cent to €381.8m. Nectarines sales were also down year, falling 23.6 per cent to 357,471 tonnes, with a corresponding value of €408.1m (-2 per cent).

Plum exports fell by 27.4 per cent in volume and 13 per cent in value to 71,565 tonnes and €86.5m.

Apricots bucked the 2018 trend, rising 22 per cent in volume and 31 per cent in value to 108,956 tonnes and €143m.

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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