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By Maura Maxwell

Tuesday 5th May 2020, 10:13 GMT

Covid-19 puts brakes on Peruvian export growth



Shipment volumes drop markedly after government lockdown comes into effect

Peru exported US\$208m of fresh fruits, vegetables and grains in March, a decrease of 8 per cent on the same period last year, according to fresh produce consultancy Fresh Fruit.

Overall figures for the first quarter of 2020 show that shipments rose 2 per cent on last year to US\$1.08bn.

The year started strongly, with exports to the end of February up 4 per cent in volume and 5 per cent in value compared to the year-earlier period, at 484,814 tonnes and US\$872m.

"This was mainly driven by a greater supply of mango (+12 per cent on the previous year) and higher grape prices," Fresh Fruit said.

Together, these two fruits typically account for around two-thirds of Peru's agri-export volume during the first three months of the year.

However, growth stalled as the coronavirus pandemic began to spread globally. In February the country exported US\$253m, 4 per cent less than in the same month of 2019.

A weekly breakdown of shipment

data for March shows that while export volumes for the first three weeks were 5 per cent higher than the year-earlier period, this changed to a fall of 25 per cent in the last weeks of the month after the government imposed strict quarantine measures to halt the spread of the virus.

In a typical year, export volumes ramp up week by week due to the start of the avocado and pomegranate campaigns.

In the past five years, Peruvian agricultural exports have shown average annual growth of 10 per cent, but Fresh Fruit notes that this trend could change in 2020.

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

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