

## **UNIFRUTTI LEMONS: SEGMENTED DEMAND MET ALL YEAR ROUND**

**Unifrutti Italia triples imports of counter-seasonal lemons with edible peel. And chem-free oranges are coming.**

Covid-19 accelerated the consumer trend for all citrus fruits worldwide in 2020, and in the case of lemon, the acceleration was not only in terms of quantities, but also in terms of the segmentation of consumer demand; the new demand that had manifested for some time in the face of different offers, were in fact exacerbated by the effects of the pandemic, creating different consumer patterns that each demand very different products based on each different lifestyle. And the lemon, a versatile citrus fruit that lends itself to a variety of uses in every season, distributed everywhere all year round, has become the mirror of a changing, segmented, demanding and contemporary fruit and vegetable consumer, on whom Unifrutti focuses by profiling its own offering.

Fruit and vegetable consumers are not all the same and, as such, demand an equally diversified product: alongside those interested in convenience and price, there is also an increasingly large section of the market that is strongly linked to local produce and where products were sourced from, while others consider sustainable products to be a priority.

The lemon is the third category with the highest turnover in sustainable agriculture in 2020 (source: Nielsen Osservatorio Immagino 2020-2 data) and its sustainability goes hand in hand with the edibility of its peel, which allows it to be safely consumed in all its parts, from the zest to the juice. This need is primarily linked to cooking, another household habit that the pandemic has contributed to bringing back into the lives of Italians with great momentum over the last year.

Particularly in the case of counter-seasonal lemons, the edibility of the peel is a very important added value, of which more and more consumers are becoming aware and which meets particularly strict quality standards in Italy.

"Thanks to the Group's various production of lemons, located in different climatic areas," explains Gianluca Defendini, CEO of Unifrutti Italia, "we are aiming for a careful selection of the harvests in order to be able to distribute large volumes of lemons with edible peel 365 days a year. During the winter season, Italian demand is satisfied with Sicilian Made in Italy lemons, including the prized Femminello di Siracusa IGP lemon. During the upcoming summer season, Unifrutti expects to triple the importation of Eureka lemons with wax-free and chem-free peel, coming both from our 300 hectares in Argentina (located in the renowned Tucuman area) and from the South Africa division of the Group, which is recognised as a centre of production excellence for the whole citrus sector". The possibility of offering a post-harvest treatment that is compatible with the needs of a public that is more attentive to sustainability and completely edible products, even in overseas production, is an important plus that goes hand in hand with Unifrutti Group's philosophy: the constant raising of quality standards on all products, throughout the year, to guarantee continuity for all types of consumer.

In the Italian citrus fruit counter-season of 2021, Unifrutti will also implement a change in the production of its oranges, raising the quality standards for the selected types of orange that will enter our country. This will include the arrival of Navel and Valencia oranges with edible peel from South Africa, with the aim of expanding this segment on an ongoing basis.

This is an excellent operation, with volumes that are still limited for the Group, but which perfectly represents its values and long-term strategy, centred on addressing a global consumer without the need to standardise the product, but rather enhancing its differentiation. The aim is to provide the most flexible offer possible, which is capable of meeting all changes in the market in different countries, the evolution of habits and the ever-increasing sensitivity to health issues.

Unifrutti Group is one of the main global players in the fresh fruit market, vertically integrated in production, marketing and distribution, with more than 14,000 hectares of land in Chile, Turkey, Philippines, Ecuador, Argentina, South Africa and Italy, 93 agricultural companies of which 59 are owned by Unifrutti Group. The Group oversees the entire value chain and thanks to direct ownership of land located in different climate zones of the world, it is able to serve more than 50 countries all year round, to which it distributes about 700,000 tonnes of fresh fruit to over 500 customers. The Group recorded an expected turnover of more than 700 million dollars in 2020.

Founded in 1948 by Guido de Nadai, today Unifrutti employs more than 11,000 people at its Headquarters and operating locations in Japan, Chile, South Africa, Philippines, Italy, Spain, Argentina, Uruguay, Turkey, the Middle East, China and India.

In Europe, Unifrutti owns almost 400 hectares of property (in development) and manages more than 1500 hectares, two logistics platforms in Verona and Macerata, a specialised banana ripening centre in Ancona, as well as three stands at the CAR in Verona (Verona's Agri-food Centre) and two at the CAR in Rome (Rome's Agri-food Centre). Unifrutti operates both the production of these with its farms in Sicily, Marche and Puglia, and the marketing of products from its locations in Spain, Chile, Argentina and South Africa.