

Pome fruit export volumes down due to continued drought

Pome fruit export volumes have seen a negative impact from the continued drought conditions in the major pome fruit production areas.



PR04D via [pixabay](https://pixabay.com/)

The initial pome fruit crop estimate anticipated a 5% growth in export volumes, due to new orchards coming into production, however, the anticipated volumes did not materialise as the harvesting season progressed as fruit size in general and pack-out of fruit on tree were affected by a combination of drought and heatwave conditions.

Current volumes in storage combined with exports to date led to the downward adjustment for pome fruit export cartons. The newly calculated volumes indicate a decrease of between -6% to -9% compared to the previous season (refer to table below).

Pome fruit export estimate (12.5 kg equivalent cartons)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2 yr Avg	2017 Est	Estimate vs 2016	
Apples	34 740 044	27 127 687	33 063 328	34 063 266	33 563 297	31 001 460	-3 061 806	-9%
Pears	15 832 419	16 248 989	15 360 718	17 775 364	16 568 041	16 796 977	-978 386	-6%
Total	50 572 464	43 376 676	48 424 046	51 838 630	45 900 361	47 798 437	-4 040 192	-8%

A decrease in export volumes of Golden Delicious (-11%), Granny Smith (-20%), Pink Lady (-29%) and Fuji (-16%) can directly be attributed to weather conditions impacting on colour development, fruit size, and pack-outs.

Pear export volumes are also down on initial projections. The decrease in export volumes of Williams Bon Chretien (-5%) is due to smaller fruit size, good demand from the canning industry and a lack of demand from the Northern Hemisphere importing countries. Packhams Triumph (-4%), Abate Fetel (-14%) and Vermont Beauty (-19%) are also down compared to last year. On the contrary export volumes of Forelle are in line with the previous season.

A tough season in terms of grower returns and profitability levels is anticipated as a result of the strengthening of the rand against the major currencies (US Dollar, UK Pound Sterling and Euro) in combination with the decrease in export volumes.

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