

Update

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Beacon Commodities



Our latest trip to visit suppliers took us to Morocco to inspect the 2015 coriander harvest and learn more about Moroccan orris root. The weather was certainly on the side of the coriander with three consecutive days of 45 degrees. Certainly hot enough to dry the coriander to a suitable moisture content!

Moroccan Agriculture

Morocco exports vast quantities of fruit and vegetables with their produce arriving in the UK earlier than their competitors in Europe. It also grows significant quantities of cereals, mainly for their own consumption, with coriander being grown by small farmers on small plots as big farming conglomerates are not interested in the small yields that are achieved.



TPH inspecting the 2015 crop

The 2015 coriander crop

Farmers we met, were reporting average yields with predominantly good quality throughout. Morocco benefited from a good rain season this year, followed by sustained periods of sunshine but the extreme heat (42–45°C) during our visit was certainly unusual with normal temperatures expected around 25–28 degrees.



We visited the two main growing regions in Morocco. The first, where approximately 90% of the crop is grown, between Casablanca and Tangier, to the north of Kenitra. The remainder tends to be grown around Casablanca.

The Moroccan harvest

It is understood that Morocco's smaller farmers grow approximately between 15,000–16,000 tonnes of coriander per year of which the majority is exported. Their yields are also lower than European coriander growers producing around 800–1000 kilos per hectare. Both the quantity and the yield are well below European levels, however, Morocco is only losing around 10%–15% of their yield after cleaning (approximately 7% is splits and 8% is foreign matter). Compare this to Europe, where around 30% is lost to cleaning, shows how strong the quality of the Morocco crop is.

A combine finishing the wheat harvest before moving onto coriander in the foreground



Walking the fields with a Moroccan farmer



Coriander seed head



Coriander field



Morocco's answer to livestock fencing – lines of very prickly cacti

The coriander is planted anytime between January and March and is usually harvested at the end of May, beginning of June depending on weather. It has been known to plant a field twice in a summer but at a high risk to the farmer and once is the norm. Interestingly, most Moroccan coriander is harvested early in the morning (between 6am-10am) when the seed has a bit more moisture. This is to avoid a large percentage of splits which occurs when the seed is too dry, as a result of impact within the combine harvester.



The typical touristy photo!

Prices

Although unsure at this time, as harvests can be affected right up until the crop is in the store, there is no doubt prices for Moroccan (and the majority of coriander) will open up firm and remain firm for the first few months. This is due to shortages last year and no carry over stock currently available.

The quality of Moroccan coriander means that the majority is exported to Japan and South Korea for the food trade where it is used extensively in their cooking. It is hoped that prices will reduce because of the average yields and good quality however caution must be exercised with India's demand as they have been experiencing heavy monsoon rains, greatly affecting their crop.

Please do contact us if you would like to know more.



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