

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Date: 3/24/2014

GAIN Report Number: CI1403

Chile

Post: Santiago

Chilean Fruit Exports hit by a Port Strike and Frost in 2014

Report Categories:

Fresh Fruit

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Report Highlights:

The port strike and abnormally cold weather hit stone fruit and blueberry exporters the hardest.

General Information:

During the Southern Hemisphere spring (December/January) stone fruit and blueberry exporters were hit hard not once but two times. Firstly there was a terrible frost that destroyed between 17 and 60 percent of the crops and secondly a strike by port works meant that for two weeks Chile couldn't export anything. These two events caused a loss of \$150 million dollars to the sector.

In January 2014 a 22.5 percent drop, valued at US \$150 million, in exports of fresh fruit was recorded, according to figures from the Ministry of Agriculture. Unseasonably cold weather, especially heavy frosts during September, negatively affected fresh fruit production in the most important regions (O'Higgins and Maule) of the country. This caused a substantial decline in shipments of stone fruits, (with the exception of cherries), and blueberries. Additionally, the port strike at the San Antonio Port caused delays of the shipments. But the industry was able to channel some shipments through alternative ports, like Valparaiso and Coquimbo. Shipments of Plums suffered a decrease of 60 percent peaches with a reduction of 58 percent, Nectarines by 52 percent and blueberries with a 17 percent reduction, compared to the same period last year.