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"Lobbying can provide decision-makers with valuable information and data" (OECD)

The importance of LOBBY

Often when I have to answer the question **"What is AILIMPO?" the best answer is: "We are a lobby"**. When AILIMPO was founded 24 years ago in 1998, the word "lobby" was unknown and had negative connotations. Lobby was then synonymous with power in the shadows, secrecy and even mafia-like practices. Nothing could be further from the truth; this was certainly the image conveyed in Hollywood political films of this simple interlocution between sectors of civil society and legislators and governments.

To summarize, AILIMPO, as an interprofessional association of a sector, tries to communicate and inform its ideas, economic analysis and proposals to the executive and legislative powers in order to defend our situation or request changes in the legislation that affects us. **By lobbying we try to ensure that political decisions are taken taking into account a realistic view of the lemon and grapefruit sector. With transparency and objectivity.**

To be more efficient, AILIMPO participates in other international lobbies such as FRESHFEL EUROPE, the WCO or EFEO (European Federation of Essential Oils), where by the way, this week they have appointed a Spanish chairman: **Manolo Donaire. Congratulations!** Lobbying is also a way to make a better country, to make Spain.



Algeria in the news

This week, in terms of Spanish national politics, **the country in fashion is Algeria**. Obviously, it is not the purpose of these lines to comment on or analyze the Spain-Morocco-Algeria conflict in relation to the Sahara issue. But **it is a good occasion to recall the relationship between Spanish lemons and Algeria**.

The last time we exported lemon to this market was in 2015 when we sold 1,218 tons amounting to 1.3 million euros. Modest numbers but showing a growing trend that made us think that this market could have potential for our lemons with a population of 41 million consumers. All this volume were Verna lemons and it seemed that a window had opened in a new market that was then characterized by a growing economy in a democratic political context. In addition, the logistics were simple and fast by ship from the port of Alicante. **From the end of 2015, difficulties began** due to frequent administrative obstacles, port problems... a situation that discourages and hinders lemon trade with this country. In addition, the Algerian economy began to slow down in 2016 due to the fall in petrol prices.

In 2019 Algeria imposes on a number of products (including citrus) imported from the EU **a tariff of 120%**, forcing us to forget about any possibility of exporting to Algeria. **This week the Spain-Algeria relations are broken** which given the background has a null impact on our business but cancels any possibility in the medium term.

Sometimes we wonder why all lemon and grapefruit producers in the world want to sell in the EU. The answer is clear: life and business in our sector outside Europe is extremely difficult. The EU27 is a democratic area, with legal certainty, a free internal market and stability for its 450 million consumers, it has all the characteristics to be the best market in the world. **Let us remember that as European producers we have an incredible advantage that differentiates us from our competitors and that we have to assert with retailers and consumers.**

