

## EU farmers want S.Africa fruit imports suspended due to disease

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Copa-Cogeca, which groups large farms and agricultural cooperatives,

said five cargo loads of produce from South Africa contaminated with Black Spot had been detected at the borders.

"The [citrus fruit](#) sector is vital in Europe both from an economic and social point of view. The disease currently does not exist in the EU," said Copa-Cogeca Secretary-General Pekka Pesonen.

A spokesman for the European Commission, Frederic Vincent, said the request would be examined by experts at the end of the month.

He added that the Commission had "encouraged" South Africa "to improve its controls" and said the European Union executive favoured "measures being put in place proactively".

Copa-Cogeca's Pesonen said South African authorities had been asked repeatedly to put in place measures to prevent the spread of the disease to Europe after the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) warned of the [high risk](#) of contamination.

But after Black Spot was found at the borders of Britain, Germany and the Netherlands he wrote to the Commission "urging them to suspend imports to the EU immediately until the disease has been eradicated.

"We cannot wait until the next impact assessment to take action. We need to protect the EU sector against the introduction of Black Spot disease as no [control measures](#) currently exist."

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